CHILDREN OF CHINA

C. CAMPBELL BROWN

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CHILDREN OF CHINA

"THE good man is he who does not lose his child-heart."—MENCIUS, 371-288 B.C.

"WHAT the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,

That to the world are children;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

. . . . . .

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead."

LONGFELLOW.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

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THE EMPEROR OF CHINA

CHILDREN OF CHINA

BY

COLIN CAMPBELL BROWN

AUTHOR OF
"CHINA IN LEGEND AND STORY"

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NOV 23 1910
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WITH EIGHT COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
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TO

ROBIN, MARGERY AND HUGH

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

My dear Boys and Girls,

There is a nook among the hills in far-away China to which, if only I possessed the famous flying carpet, I should very much like to carry you. To know it properly one ought to find it for oneself upon a day in spring. The road to it runs at the foot of steep hills, on which the grey earth peeps through a threadbare carpet of dry grasses.

Above these lower hills the mountain-sides are green, shading into slate-colour and black; and when the sky clouds over, they look dark and angry. The road rounds a corner and passes a wood: a few more steps and the baby valley is in sight.

To leave the path and pick your way through some trees is the work of a moment. You reach an open space like a little lawn. Above the lawn is a bank, on which, among shrubs and scattered trees, many flowers are growing.

A faint scent of almonds breathes in the air. You feast your eyes on great wild roses and azaleas, rose-coloured, magenta, crimson—bushes of red fire burning among ferns and green branches. Here, you notice tufted flowers like feathers carved in ivory; there,

white jasmine, clematis and plants whose shining leaves are nearly covered by balls of snow. Over the flowers and under the tree-tops great swallow-tailed butterflies go whirling by. It is as if one of the old men of the hills of whom Chinese stories tell, had opened a doorway in the mountain-side and led you into a sweet wild garden of fairyland.

The daily round of life in China is bare enough, like a worn road winding among hills; but when one comes to know the children of the country, it is like finding a surprise garden where one had only looked for rocks and boulders. The love of boys and girls, and the tenderness and self-denial which they call forth among older people, are the flowers that grow in this enchanted spot.

The flying carpet was lost long ago, when this old world forgot how to be young, but you boys and girls sometimes weave one for yourselves and fly off as far as Pekin or Peru. It is my hope in these pages to join some of you in this pleasant task and carry you to some of the far-off garden nooks of China.

The Chinese by Sir John F. Davies, *Child Life in Chinese Homes*, by Mrs Bryson, and *Chinese Slave Girls*, by Miss M. E. Talmage, are books which have helped me to write about the children of China. I am sure they will interest you by and by whenever you can find time to read them. But the big Chinese city in which I live, and the hundreds of villages round it, help me most of

all to tell you about China and its boys and girls, and I greatly hope that one day some of you may come and see them for yourselves.

I am,

Your sincere friend,

C. Campbell Brown.

Chinchew, 1909.

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CHILDREN OF CHINA

CHAPTER I

THE INVISIBLE TOP

THE beginning of the world, as it is described to Chinese boys and girls, is stranger than a fairy tale. First of all, according to the story, there was something called 'khi' which could not be seen, nor touched, but was everywhere. After a time this 'khi' began to turn round like a great invisible top. As it whirled round, the thicker part sank downwards and became the earth, whilst the thinner part rose upwards, growing clearer until it formed the sky, and so the heavens and the earth span themselves into being. Presently, for the story changes like a dream, there came a giant named Pwanku. For thousands of years the giant worked, splitting masses of rock with his mallet and chisel, until the sun, moon and stars could be seen through the openings which he had made. The heavens rose higher, the earth spread wider, and Pwanku himself grew six feet taller every day. When he died, his head became mountains, his breath wind, and his voice thunder; his veins changed into rivers, his body into the earth, his bones into rocks and his beard into the stars that stream across the night sky. But though all this is only 'a suppose story' of long ago, the first part of it is wonderfully like what wise men in our time have told us about the beginning of things.

Now we must talk of China as it is to-day. The country in which Chinese children live is a land of hills and plains, covered with cities, villages and temples. You can imagine how big it is when you remember that Szechuan, which is but one of its eighteen provinces, is larger than Great Britain and Ireland.

How China grew into a great empire is one of the most wonderful stories of the world. Its people are said to have come from the west, across the middle of Asia, settling at length in what is now the province of Shansi, just where the Yellow River bends sharply eastwards. Small at first and surrounded by savages, the baby kingdom soon began to grow. Like the tiny tent of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, which unfolded until an army could rest beneath the roof, China spread until, a thousand years before the time of Our Lord, its borders on the north and west were pretty much what they are to-day, and it had crept southwards many miles beyond the Yellow River. The nation went on growing, drawing other tribes and peoples into itself, until, not long after King Alfred's time, the mother kingdom, without counting its subject countries, was fifteen times as large as Great Britain.

What is now the Chinese Empire is said to have been gained in peaceful ways rather than by fighting, and this no doubt is partly true. The people knew more than their neighbours did. Their life was better and happier. One after another the tribes wanted to join them, and so the kingdom grew until one of the great changes of the world was made. This will help you to understand why the Chinese have always believed in peace rather than force, and until lately have not cared for war.

The history of China at first, like that of other nations, is rather misty. In spite of this, however, we can make out that long ago the people had wise and good men to

lead them, among whom were Yao and Shun, the model rulers of the empire, and Yu the Great, who drained the waters of a vast flood and cut down forests until the land was fit to dwell in. Much has happened since then. Greece and Rome have risen, flourished, and decayed. This nation, under many different families of rulers, and in spite of some seventeen changes of capital, has outlived them by centuries. Turks, Mongols and Manchus have fought against it, and, as in the present day, at times have conquered the country, only to be conquered in turn by the wonderful Chinese people.

Of all the many changes in China's story, perhaps none has been more startling than that which happened in 1908, when the Emperor Kwangsu and the Empress Dowager died, within two days of each other. The whole country was thrown into mourning, almost all the people going unshaved for a hundred days, until long hair and bristling faces made the Chinese world look sad indeed.

On the 2nd December of the same year, the Emperor Hsuan Tung, born in 1906, ascended the Dragon Throne, and so the oldest of Empires came to have the youngest of sovereigns for its ruler, and the world discovered that the greatest child on earth was a little Chinese boy. It is said that the baby emperor, frightened by the sight of so many people in state dress, began to cry when he was set upon the throne. He was soon comforted, however, by some of the ladies-in-waiting, and sat quietly until the grand ceremony was finished.

The little man is the first ruler of China who, from the beginning of his reign, has had prayer offered for him by Christian people all over the empire, and we may be sure that blessing will be given to him in answer to these prayers. Boys and girls everywhere

ought to ask God to help the boy sovereign of the last great heathen empire of the world.

Here is a description which opens a window for us into his nursery: "Young as he is, the emperor shows a great love of soldiers, and has little spears and swords and horses among his playthings. The sight of toy weapons will stop him from crying and make him laugh. His Majesty is much pleased when a horse is shown to him, and will not be satisfied until he has been lifted on to its back and taken for a ride."

CHAPTER II

CHINESE BABIES

A DIFFERENCE is made between boys and girls in China, but it is not so great as the following lines might lead you to think:

"When a son is born,
He sleeps on a bed,
He is clothed in robes,
He plays with gems,
His cry is princely loud,
This emperor is clad in purple,
He is the domestic prince and king.

When a daughter is born,
She sleeps on the ground,
She is clothed with a wrapper,
She plays with a tile,
She cannot be either evil or good,
She has only to think of preparing wine and food,
Without giving any cause of grief to her parents." [1]

In winter time little King Baby is rolled in clothes until he looks like a ball, though his feet and part of his

[1] Dolittle, *Handbook of the Chinese Language.*

legs are usually bare. When asleep he is laid in a bamboo cradle, on rough rockers which loudly thump the floor. A red cord is tied to his wrist, lest he should be naughty when grown up, and people should say, " They forgot to bind your wrist when you were little." Ancient coins are hung round his neck by a string to drive away evil spirits and to make him grow up an obedient child. When he is a month old, friends and relatives bring him presents, a feast is made and Master Tiny has his head shaved in front of the ancestral tablets, which stand on a narrow table at the back of the chief room of the house. The barber who takes off the black fluff from the little round head, receives a present of money; baby, for his part, becoming the proud possessor of a cap, with a row of gilded images in front, which is presented to him by his grandmother, together with a pair of shoes [1] having a pussy's face worked upon each toe in the hope that " he may walk as safely through life as a cat does on a wall." Baby-boy also receives what is called his ' milk-name,' which serves him until he goes to school. Some of the names given to babies sound strange: Dust-pan, Pock-marked Boy, Winter Dog, One Hundred and Ten. Ugly names are sometimes given, in the hope that the spirits may think that babies so called are not worth troubling about and thus may leave them to grow up unharmed. In the same way an ear-ring is put in a little boy's ear, and he is called Little Sister to make the demons imagine that he is only a girl, and so not worthy of their notice, or his head is clean-shaved all over, and he is dressed like a monk for the same purpose.

Girl babies, like their little brothers, are shaved at the end of the first month, but with less ceremony.

[1] When these shoes have the character for ' King ' on them, they are called Tiger shoes.

They are called Water Fairy, Slave Girl, Likes to Cry, Golden Needle, or some such name. Though some of the little ones suffer from neglect and hardship, many of them are happy in their babyhood. The people say, "Children are one's very flesh, life, heart," and when the traveller sees a father or a mother proudly carrying one of them about, or patiently bearing with its naughtiness, he can well believe that they mean what they say. Sometimes a mother pretends to bite her baby, saying, "Good to eat, good to eat"; sometimes she presses her nose against its tender cheek, as if smelling it, and kisses it again and again. The little things have shining black eyes, with long dark lashes which look so nice against the faint olive tint of the delicate skin.

When Master Tiny is a year old, another feast is made, and brightly-coloured shoes and hats are given to him. After the feast is over the little fellow is put on a table in the room where the ancestors of the family are worshipped. Round him are placed various things, such as a pen, a string of cash, a mandarin's button, etc. Then everyone waits to see which he will stretch out a fat hand to seize, for it is supposed that the thing which he chooses will show what he is going to be or to do in the world, by and by. If baby grabs the pen, he will be a scholar; if the money takes his fancy, he will go into business; but if his eager fingers grasp the shining mandarin button, his father and mother hopefully believe that he will be a great man some day.

The Chinese are wonderfully patient and kind in treating their babies. Much of the gladness of their lives and of their homes is bound up with the boys and girls who play about their houses. They love their children, in spite of things which sometimes seem to prove that they do not. When the little ones learn,

CHINESE BABIES

at church or Christian school, to know the Saviour, they bring a new gladness into the home. Not a few Chinese children have been able to interest their fathers and mothers and other friends in the Gospel, as you shall hear later on, and so the words " A little child shall lead them," have found a new meaning in far-away China.

Here is the picture of two little twin-boys, four years old. Some time ago, one of them said to his sister: " God does not sleep at night." His father, who had heard the words, asked, " Lien-a, how do you know that God does not sleep at night? "

" The hymn says, ' God night and day is waking, He never sleeps,' " answered the little fellow.

" But can't you think of something yourself which shows that God is awake at night? " asked his father.

" I hear the wind at night," said the child, after a little pause, " and see the moon and stars." He meant God must be awake to keep the wind blowing and the moon and stars shining.

One day a friend gave each of the twins a bright new five-cent piece. Their mother took care of the coins, saying, " I will keep them for you, until we can get enough to use as buttons for your next new jackets," and the little fellows were ever so happy. Not long after, people were gathering money to build a new church, and the little boys' father said to them: " Children, have you got anything which you can give to help to build the new church? " The little boys thought and thought, then one of them said, "Yes, we have our silver buttons." So they gave their treasured little shining pennies most gladly. But I think that God was gladder still.

CHAPTER III

THE CHILDREN'S HOME

HOMES differ as much in China as in other lands. Some are palaces, some poor huts, some are caves cut into the face of cliffs, some are boats upon rivers, where thousands of boys and girls learn to handle the oar from their earliest childhood. Some are in dusty villages by the roadside, others are set between stairs of green rice fields upon mountain slopes, or built upon flat plains among giant millet and other crops.

A large number of children are brought up in cities. You cannot easily get at their homes because of the streams of blue-clad people who throng the streets. Come for a walk among the busy shops, so that you may know something of the place where Chinese boys and girls spend so much of their time. Sedan-chairs, carried by strong men, push through the crowd, shaving butchers' stalls and narrowly missing the heads of running children. Burden bearers, with bags of rice on their backs, or loaded with vegetables, pigs in open baskets, bales of cotton or tobacco, follow one another over the slippery pavement.

Here comes a pedlar selling tapes, needles and bits of silk. He is called a ' bell shaker,' because he tinkles a little bell to call attention to his wares. That poor man, with shaggy hair and half-naked skin, is ' a cotton-rags fairy,' or beggar. He lives in a ' beggars' camp ' not far away.

Look in at this temple. The heavy scent, reminding you of rose-leaves and stale tobacco, which comes through the open doorway, is the smell of incense. Beyond the court, inside the door, is a big room where

idols, once bright with gilding, now blackened with smoke, sit each upon its throne. Those spots of light inside the hall are made by candles burning on the altar beneath the gloomy roof.

Boys and girls do not care to go inside, unless their mothers bring them to bow before the idols. Some of the images have ugly faces, blue, black and fiery red, which children can scarcely look at without being afraid. Some are gilt and have a strange smile upon their lips. Here is a description of an idol in its temple:

"I dreamed I was an idol, and I sat
Still as a crystal, smiling as a cat,
Where silent priests through immemorial hours
Wove for my head mysterious scarlet flowers.
. . . . . .
There as I waited day by changeless day,
My people brought their gifts and knelt to pray,
And I . . . . . .
. . . . . in unavailing pity sat
Still as a crystal, smiling as a cat."

Let us turn down this narrow lane. Now we have left the shops and the busy street. Look at the rows of smallish houses, each with a bit of plain wall and a bamboo screen hanging in front of the door. You hear the sound of children's voices within as you pass. How happy that little boy is, running along in bright red trousers, flying his kite. His home is near by; when he is older he will go to school, or learn a trade in one of the shops not far away.

Here the streets are narrower. What strange names they have! Stone Bird Lane, Grinding Row, Old Woo's Lane, Bean Curd Lane, Family Ma's Market.

Look at this big house. Turn in by the opening at the right of the front door. Now we are inside the first court, an open space with rooms all round. The

room in front of us is the largest in the house. A wooden cabinet stands on the narrow table against the back wall: it is full of slips of wood, each about a foot high. These slips of wood are called 'ancestral tablets,' because the Chinese think that the souls of their ancestors live in them. Each one has writing upon it, telling the name of the person whose soul is said to be inside.

To right and left of the chief room are two smaller ones, used as bedrooms. Behind these again is another court, with rooms ranged round it like the front one, and behind it perhaps another. Some houses have 'five descents'; for Chinese stories, which are called 'descents,' are put one behind the other, instead of being piled upwards as are ours.

You may see a girl seated at a loom, driving the shuttle to and fro. How slowly the cloth grows. Every time the shuttle flies across, the web gains a line. Thread by thread it lengthens, just as a child's life lengthens day by day; that is why the Chinese proverb says, "Days and months are like a shuttle, light and dark fly like an arrow." The older boys of the household are at school or at work. That woman who is washing rice in an earthen pot, has a baby slung by a checked cotton cloth upon her back. The child rolls its bullet head and sucks a fat thumb, whilst one dumpy foot sticks out below its mother's arm. The lady in a blue tunic, with bright flowers in her hair, is the mistress of the house; see how she sways on her tiny bound feet, as she moves across the tiled floor.

If the head of the house is a scholar he wears long robes of cotton or silk, blue and grey, one above the other, or in the hot weather white 'grass cloth,' thin as muslin. He has the top of his head shaved and wears his back hair in a long plait or queue. On New Year's

CHILD LEADING BUFFALO

day or at other special times, he puts on a pointed hat, with a flossy red tassel, top-boots and a silk jacket on which is embroidered a stork or some other bird, to show his literary rank. An officer in the army would have a bear or some other fierce animal embroidered on his jacket instead of a bird.

In country homes a mill for taking the husk off rice stands inside the door, where perhaps you might expect to find a hatstand. Sometimes a sleek brown cow moos softly on the other side of the porch. Jars, full of salted vegetables, share the front court with the usual pigs, chickens and dogs. Look at that mandarin duck, bobbing her head and throwing forward her bill, as if trying to bring up a bone which had stuck in her throat just as she was in the act of curtsying to you. She bows and curtsies all day, until even the fat baby, lying on a kerb-stone at the edge of the court, grows tired of watching her antics.

Children run in and out of the house. One plays with a big, green grasshopper, which struggles hopelessly at the end of a string. Somewhere outside, a little boy or girl is sure to be leading a buffalo by a rope, on the edge of the rice fields. Farther away some boys and girls are gathering leaves, or cutting fern on the hillside.

About noon the household gathers for dinner. The men go to the kitchen and return with bowls of rice and sweet potatoes or vermicelli. In the middle of the table they have salted vegetables, bean-curd cake cut into small pieces, dried shrimps, and on feast days, pork hash in soy, all in different dishes. Each man has two pieces of bamboo, rather thicker than wooden knitting-needles, which he holds between the thumb and first three fingers of his right hand. With these chopsticks, as they are called, he picks up a bit of

meat or vegetable and begins to eat it, but before it is swallowed he puts his bowl to his lips, and holding it there, pushes some rice or potatoes into his mouth. One mouthful follows another, and in no time the bowl is empty. Now you know how to answer the Chinese riddle: "Two pieces of bamboo drive ducks through a narrow door." The 'narrow door' of course is a mouth, the 'ducks' are bits of pork and fish, the pieces of bamboo are chopsticks.

Sometimes the country people do not eat at a table, but sit in the shadow of the porch, or on the edge of the stone coping which surrounds the front court. The story is told of a poor boy, who used to eat his meals in this way. The stone on which he sat had a crack in it. When the boy began to study, he used to bring his book and a basin of food, so that he might read as he sat on the broken slab eating his dinner. By and by he became a great scholar and viceroy or ruler of the province of Szechuan. When he returned to his native place, full of riches and honour, he rebuilt the old home and made it beautiful, but he kept the broken kerb-stone unaltered, in front of the dining-room. It was left with the crack in it to remind him of the time when he was a barefoot boy and used to sit by the edge of the court, eating rice or learning his lessons.

When the men have finished their meal, the women and children have theirs. How the fat little boys and girls love sweet potatoes! They take them, pink and yellow skinned ones, in their chubby fingers and stuff them down their throats, dogs and chickens waiting eagerly meanwhile to pick up the skins and stringy bits which drop upon the ground.

Though eating apart, girls and women mix more freely with the men in these country homes than in those of educated townspeople, where they must keep to their

own rooms at the back of the house. Into the homes of China, so different from each other in some things, so alike in others, the message of the Saviour's love finds its way. Here one, there another—man, woman or child, believes the Gospel and begins to serve God. In spite of persecution and unkindness, the new convert remains faithful. By and by another member of the family is won: sometimes the whole household is changed, and the home becomes a Christian home.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL DAYS

THE Chinese people think so much of learning that they say, " Better to rear a pig than bring up a son who will not read! "

When the time comes for a boy to go to school, a lucky day is chosen by a fortune-teller, and young Hopeful, spotless in dress, and with head well shaved, is taken to be introduced to his teacher. In the neat bundle which he carries as he trots along by his father's side he has ' the four gems of the study ' ready for use, that is to say, a pen which has a brush for a nib, a cake of ink, a stone slab for rubbing down the ink with water, and a set of books. As soon as the new pupil has been taken into the school and introduced in the proper way, the teacher asks the spirit of Confucius to help the little scholar with his work. Then the master sits down and the boy bows his head to the ground, beseeching his master to teach him letters. After this a ' book-name,' such as Flourishing Virtue, Literary Rank, Opening Brightness, is

chosen and given to the lad; for a Chinese boy gets a new name when he goes to school. The room in which the budding scholar will sit at a little black table for many a day to come is often dark and dingy, with tiny windows and a low tiled roof.

A book, called *The Juvenile Instructor*, tells how children used to be trained, in the good old days of China's greatness. It says: "When able to talk, lads must be instructed to answer in a quick, bold tone, and girls in a slow and gentle one. At the age of seven they should be taught to count and name the points of the compass, but at this age boys and girls should not be allowed to sit on the same mat nor to eat at the same table. At eight they must wait for their superiors and prefer others to themselves. . . . Let children always be taught to speak the simple truth, to stand erect in their proper places, and to listen with respectful attention."

At an old-fashioned Chinese school the pupils have no A B C; but they have to learn by heart 'characters,' that is, the signs which stand for words in their books. Boys who expect afterwards to go into business are taught to do sums by a clerk or shopkeeper, who is hired to teach them; but the ordinary schoolboys are taught no arithmetic, or geography, or dates. Perhaps you think you would like to go to a Chinese school! But wait a bit until you hear what Chinese boys have to learn.

Beginners stand in a row before the master's table and are taught to read the first line of the *Three Character Classic*, until they know it pretty well. Then they sit in their places and repeat it aloud. If one of them forgets a word, he goes up to the table again and asks his master how to read it, but he must not go too often.

What a din there is with some twenty boys all reading at the pitch of their voices! The teacher does not scold them, for the busier his pupils are at their work, the noisier they become. Whenever one of the class knows his task, he hands in his book, and turning his face away, so that his back is to his master, he repeats his lesson aloud. This 'backing the book' (as it is called), is to prevent a dishonest pupil from using his sharp black eyes to peep over the top of the page and help himself along.

After the *Three Character Classic* and *The Hundred Surnames*, which gives a list of the family names used in China, the schoolboy reads a book called *The Thousand Character Classic*. This book, made up of exactly a thousand characters, is said to have been written, by order of an emperor of China, in a single night. The scholar who wrote it worked so hard, that his hair, which was black when he began his task, had turned white when the book was finished next morning. The *Four Books* and other Classics, as the standard books of Chinese literature are called, are next begun by the pupil.

Boys do a great deal of writing at a Chinese school: when they are able to read and to repeat quotations from their famous books, they must go on to the higher art. First they are taught how to hold the brush pen. Each boy is given a small book of red characters. He dips his sharp-pointed brush in ink and holding it straight up and down begins painting the red letters over. After a time he goes on to tracing letters on thin paper over a copy. A square of wood, painted white, serves him as a slate. On this he writes characters, which balance one another, as heaven and earth, fire and water, light and darkness. By and by he begins essay and letter-writing, which is very

difficult in Chinese. Pupils used to spend many years on this, but nowadays schoolboys in China have to do more sums and less writing than their fathers did.

Writing essays and verses used to be the chief lessons at a Chinese school; for when scholars were fairly good at these, they entered for the examinations. It was a difficult thing for a boy to go into the great examination hall among two or three thousand men, and, after having been searched to make sure that he had no books or cribs up his sleeves, to go and sit at a bench and write his essay. Yet many gained degrees when very young.

One of these was called Ta Pin. He had a wonderful memory and when he had read the *Five Classics* once over, he could remember them every word! When eight years old, Ta Pin was in the house of an elderly scholar, who was pleased by his good manners and wise ways. Seeing that he behaved more like a grown-up man than a boy, the old gentleman pointed to a chair and said: " With a cushion made of tiger's skin, to cover the student's chair." Then he waited to see if Ta Pin could answer this bit of poetry as a grown-up scholar would have done, by a second line of verse, which would match what he had just said. " With a pencil made of rabbit's hair, to write the graduate's tablet," answered Ta Pin, every word of his line pairing with the corresponding word in the old gentleman's verse, ' pencil ' with ' cushion,' ' rabbit ' with ' tiger,' etc. The scholar struck the table with delight and gave a present to the boy. When Ta Pin was thirteen he became a Master of Arts, coming out higher than all the other competitors but one. He was afterwards second in the examination for the degree of Doctor of Letters and won the highest degree

of all next year. This clever boy lived over four hundred years ago, when the Ming emperors ruled in China.

The story of how Mencius' mother looked after him whilst he was at school, is very interesting. At first they lived together near a cemetery and little Mencius amused himself with acting the various scenes which he saw at the graves. "This," said his mother, "is not the place for my boy." So she went to live in the market street. But the change brought no improvement. The little boy played then at being a shopkeeper, offering things for sale and bargaining with imaginary customers. His devoted mother then took a house beside a public school. Now the child was interested by the things which the scholars were taught, and tried to imitate them. The mother was pleased and said: "This is the proper place for my son." Near their new house was a butcher's shop. One day Mencius asked what they were killing pigs for. "To feed you," answered his mother. Then she thought to herself, "Before this child was born I wished him to be well brought up, and now that his mind is opening I am deceiving him; and this is to teach him untruthfulness." So she went and bought a piece of the pork, to make good her words. After a time, Mencius went to school. One day when he came home from school his mother looked up from the loom at which she was sitting, and asked him how far he had got with his books. He answered carelessly that "he was doing well enough." On which she took a knife and cut through the web she was weaving. The idle little boy, who knew the labour required to weave the cloth, now spoilt, was greatly surprised and asked her what she meant. Then she told him that cutting through the web and spoiling her work was like his neglecting his tasks. This made

the lad think and determine not to spoil the web of his life by idle ways; so the lesson did not need to be repeated.[1] Thanks to the care of this wise and patient mother, Mencius grew up to be a famous man.

An old-fashioned Chinese school opens about the sixteenth of the first moon, or month, and continues for the rest of the year. The teacher often goes home to attend feasts, weddings, birthdays or funerals; or when the rice is cut, so that he may get his share of the harvest from the family fields. In the third month he has to be away worshipping at the graves of his ancestors; and in the fifth month, when the dragon boats race each other, and on other festivals in the seventh, tenth and eleventh months he will probably go home for a day or two. Whenever the master is away, the boys play and idle in the streets, unless they have to help with the harvest or run messages for their parents. So you see, although they do not have regular Easter and summer holidays, they do not fare badly.

But such schools as this will soon be left only in country villages. In the larger cities pupils and teachers alike are giving up the old slow-going ways. In the Government schools the boys wear a uniform and look like young soldiers. The classes are distinguished by stripes, like those worn on their arms by privates, corporals, sergeants and so forth. You can tell the class a boy belongs to by looking at his arm. When a visitor enters the school a bell tinkles and all the boys stand up and touch their caps, as soldiers do when saluting an officer. Inspectors visit the new schools to see how masters and scholars are doing their work.

Kindergartens, where little boys and girls go to learn their first lessons, though new to China, are much

[1] James Legge, *Mencius*, p. 10.

KINDERGARTEN PUPILS

liked by the children and their parents, and before long will become a great power for good in the land. The little ones love to sing and march in time. Their tiny fingers are clever at making hills and islands out of sand, or counting coloured balls and marbles. Their sharp eyes are quick to see picture lessons, which are drawn for them upon the blackboard, and their ears attentive to the teacher who explains them. Ears, eyes, hands, feet, all help the little heads to learn, as reading, writing, geography and arithmetic are changed from lessons into delightful games, by the Kindergarten fairy.

When the closing day comes, crowds gather to see the clever babies march and wave their coloured flags. Fathers and mothers are ever so proud when they hear their own little children sing action-songs, and repeat their lessons without a mistake, and they gladly give money to put up buildings and train teachers for the 'children's garden,' for that is what Kindergarten means.

Chinese boys and girls are fond of study, and so they will surely make their country famous once more. The romance of China is not connected with making love or fighting; it gathers round the boy who is faithful at his tasks, who takes his degree early and rises to be a great official. When the reward of years of hard work comes, he goes back to the old home, bringing comfort and honour to all his friends. This is the hope which has helped on many a little scholar and made his school life glad.

This Chinese love of learning has opened a door by which the Gospel may enter the minds of the people. Wherever missionaries have gone, they have established schools, in which many children have learnt to know God's truth and love the Saviour.

CHAPTER V

GIRLS

It is hard to begin life as one who is not wanted. Many a Chinese girl cannot help knowing that she has come into the world bringing disappointment to her father and mother.

"What is your little one's name?" said a foreigner to a woman, who was walking along with a small child near Amoy.

"It is a girl," was the reply, as much as to say, "You need not trouble to waste time asking about her."

"I know, venerable dame," said the foreigner, "but what is her name?"

"Not Wanted," was the strange answer.

"You should love your little girl as much as a boy. Why do you speak so unkindly of her?" said the foreigner, thinking that the mother meant she did not want her child. The woman laughed, but said nothing.

"Now tell me her name," persisted the foreigner, anxious to show interest in the despised girl.

"Not Wanted," repeated the woman again.

"Not . . ." began the stranger once more, meaning to tell the ignorant woman not to speak so unkindly of her little girl.

"Not Wanted is her name," said the woman quickly, before the foreigner could finish the sentence.

It would be sad indeed to know one was not wanted, but it would be harder still to be reminded of it every time one was called by one's own name. How would an English girl like to be so treated?

"Not Wanted, come and have your hair brushed." "Not Wanted, where are you?" "Not Wanted, come and play with your little brother," and so forth. When a baby girl's fortune, as told by the fortune-tellers, is not a lucky one, she may perhaps be handed over to Buddhist nuns, who will give her rice, potatoes and vegetables, but no fish or meat or eggs. The little one, if she lives to grow up, will serve in the nunnery and help with the worship offered to the idols. When old enough to become a nun she will have her head shaved, till it looks as round as a bullet, and wear tight black trousers, a short blue coat and a close-fitting cap of black cloth; and she will learn to do the fine embroideries, most of which are the work of Buddhist nuns.

Sometimes, when the fortune-teller says a little girl will bring bad luck to her own family, she is given to another household, where she will be brought up to be the wife of one of the sons, when he is old enough to marry. This often happens, but it is not a good plan and leads to unhappiness, as you will hear later on.

The everyday dress of Chinese girls is simple enough. When they first begin to walk they are odd little bundles of clothes, topped by a little jacket and a cloth cap, which covers their head and ears and neck, leaving the face open. When they grow older they wear jackets of cotton,—blue stamped with white flowers is a favourite pattern,—loose coloured trousers and tiny embroidered shoes. They wear ear-rings, silver bangles on their ankles, and sometimes a ring on one finger. When they are engaged to be married, they wear a bangle on one arm. Their hair, which has been worn in a plait behind, is, when they are old enough to be married, put up in a neat coil at the back of the head, and pretty pins and flowers are stuck into

it. It is a great day in a girl's life when her hair is done up in this way.

The first great trial which a Chinese girl has to meet is when she has her feet bound. Her toes are pulled towards the heel, by winding a strip of cotton cloth round them and drawing it tight. Tiny girls of six or seven sometimes have to bear the pain of having their poor little feet pinched together in this way, though eight or nine is the more common age to begin. It must be extremely painful to have the bones twisted and the flesh crushed, until it decays and dries; but when the pain is over, and a girl has 'golden lilies,' only two or three inches long, she is very proud of them, and people praise the child's mother for all the trouble she has taken to make her daughter look so beautiful! So strong is the desire to be admired, that often girls beg to have their feet bound, in spite of all the pain they will have to bear.

Foot-binding, being foreign to Manchu customs, is not allowed in the Palace. Some years ago, the Empress Dowager herself issued an edict to the people saying: "Not to bind is better." Children brought up in God-fearing homes seldom or never have to suffer the torture of being thus lamed for life. And now, in many parts of China, fathers and mothers, who do not wish their little girls to be crippled, have joined themselves into what is called 'The Natural Foot Society.' Let us hope that before long there will be no more foot-binding in China.

Girls brought up in wealthy homes are seldom seen out of doors, but poorer children, at a very early age, have to do something to help to earn their living. They gather firing; they nurse the baby; they cook and sew; they learn to scrape the soot from the bottom of the family rice pot with a hoe; and, in some places,

they very early begin to carry loads, slung from a pole on their shoulders. Some sit beside their mothers and help to make paper money to be offered to idols. Some paste rags on a board, one on the top of the other, to be afterwards made into soles for shoes; or they weave coloured tape, or twist fibre into rough string. In some parts of China they make embroidery, working beautiful birds and flowers with their clever fingers. All Chinese girls learn to embroider and make up their own shoes and the embroidered bands which they wear round their distorted ankles. Sometimes they feed silk-worms with mulberry leaves, and afterwards wind the threads off the cocoons which the worms have spun. When a little older some girls may be seen making silver ornaments for women's hair-pins, but this is work usually done by men and boys; sometimes poor girls, while they are quite young, sell cakes and sweets in the streets, to help their parents; often they spin cotton and weave it into cloth, to make clothes for all the family.

With the exception of a very few daughters of scholars, who were taught to read and write by their fathers, girls used never to be troubled with learning. In spite of this, there are books giving the names of wise and learned women, some of whom, especially in the time of the T'ang Dynasty, wrote famous poems. This shows that ages ago women in China were educated, but as a rule in later days they were left untaught, to learn by slow degrees the 'three dependencies of woman,' "who," as the Chinese say, "depends upon her father when she is young, on her husband when she is older, and upon her son when she is very old." The story is told of a girl, who used to sing as she toiled at her daily tasks: "Oh, the tea-cup, the tea-cup, the beautiful, beauti-

ful tea-cup "— that was all the song she knew! When Christianity comes, it brings new hope and new songs, and teaches girls and boys alike to know of God and Heaven and a life away beyond the narrow courts of the houses in which the earthly lives of so many Chinese girls are shut up.

As we have seen already, a change has come over China. At the beginning of 1909 there were said to be thirty-seven girls' schools in Canton alone, one of which had over three hundred pupils, and every year adds to the number of such schools, all over the land. Christian girls teach in these schools. Not long ago a girl refused to become teacher in a Government school because she would not be allowed to read the Bible with the scholars there. Twice she said she would not go, although offered more money each time. At last the authorities said: " We must have you in our school; you may do what you like; you may teach the Bible—only you must come." Some Christian girls, after leaving school, study in the women's hospitals and become nurses and doctors. At first they help the missionary lady doctors, and afterwards, in some cases, they earn their living by going out to care for sick women and children. Thus Christianity has opened up a new way by which women may support themselves in China.

When they are tiny little children girls are often engaged to be married and go to live in their future husbands' homes. They are married, too, when very young. Sometimes a little girl is told only a short time before that she is to be sent away in a great red chair and become somebody's wife in another home. Poor little thing, she is often very frightened and unwilling to go.

The story of Pink Jade will help you to understand

about girls' marriages in China. The first hint she had of what was going to happen was when an old woman, called the 'go-between,' came to her father's house with a silver bracelet and some hair ornaments for her, as a present from her future husband's family. A paper stamped with a dragon had already been sent to her parents, giving a description of the young man she was to marry, and a paper stamped with a phœnix, giving a description of herself, had been sent in exchange.

Pink Jade's father gave her many nice clothes and dresses, five pairs of embroidered shoes, three pairs of red wooden heels, seven pairs of silver finger-rings, bracelets and hair ornaments. These gifts were packed in four red boxes and a dressing-case. Then there was some bedding in a red box, five washing tubs, a wardrobe, a table and two red lanterns. On her wedding-day Pink Jade was dressed in black trousers and petticoat trimmed with embroidery, an embroidered green satin jacket, a beautiful head-band, the gift of her mother-in-law, and many hair ornaments. Before she left her home a thick veil of red and gold, about a foot square, was fastened to her head-band by a few stitches.

A little before noon the great red chair, in which she had been carried by several men, drew near to the bridegroom's house. The burden-bearers now went on in front with the red boxes and other things, the little bride following behind in her chair, attended by the 'go-between,' and four men carrying lanterns.

It was a shy little maiden that entered the new home; then came the ceremony of bride and bridegroom together worshipping heaven and earth, after which they bowed down before the bridegroom's parents and their ancestral tablets. Some hours later, the husband

cut the stitches of the veil, and for the first time saw the face of his bride. She did not see him, however, for she dared not lift her eyes. Crowds of women from among the guests and neighbours came to look at her, saying very freely if they thought the bride pretty or ugly, which it is considered quite polite to do at weddings. Later in the evening she was shown to the men friends of the family, who repeated good wishes in verse, the poor little bride having to stand all the time while this and the other ceremonies were gone through.

On the second day Pink Jade had to cook a meal and wash some clothes, to show she understood her new duties. Her mother and sisters-in-law were pleased with the little bride, so she was happy in her new home. But before very long her husband went abroad, coming back to China only now and then.

When but a little girl of ten years old, Pink Jade had gone with her grandmother to live in a city where there was a Christian church. She was curious to see what happened inside the church, so she went to service there several times; but the singing, reading and praying all seemed strange to her, for she did not understand what they meant. Her husband had also been in church when young, but he did not like the 'new religion,' and would have nothing to do with worshipping God.

But it happened that after she was married, Pink Jade took ill and went to the Mission Hospital at Swatow, where she heard about Our Lord Jesus Christ, and how He came to save sinners from their sins. She became so much interested that she persuaded her husband to attend the services in the Hospital chapel, and before long he himself believed in Jesus Christ, and was received into the church by baptism. Pink

Jade learned to read and in time gave her heart, too, to God's service.[1]

Here is a simple rime which girls learn to repeat, so that they may know what to do, when afterwards they go as brides to their new homes.

"Bamboos thick, thick arise,
Child in wifely love be wise,
Late take rest, soon, soon rise,
Wake, comb your hair,
Adorn your face, lips, eyes ;
Chairs, tables, dust in hall,
Wash kitchen dishes all,
In chamber sewing fall.
Praise brothers, great and small,
Father, mother, worthy call,
Praise your home, both roof and wall,
Praise your lucky husband tall."

In China, as in other lands, the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ brings new love and new happiness to girls and women alike. It frees them from being despised and ill-treated, and gives them their true place in the home, for it teaches men that "there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

CHAPTER VI

GAMES AND RIDDLES

CHINESE children are kept so busy at work or study that a stranger might at first be tempted to think their lives were all work and no play. In time, however, one discovers that they have many kinds of amusements.

A favourite game is played with a ball of tightly

[1] Mrs Lyall, in *The Children's Messenger*.

wound cotton thread, which is bounced upon the pavement, the player trying to whirl round as often as possible, before giving another pat to make it jump again. Boys are fond of 'kicking the shuttlecock.' They are wonderfully clever with their feet, and send the shuttlecock flying from one to another, turning, dodging, leaning this way and that, so as to kick freely. The shuttlecock is kept on the wing for a long time in this way without once falling to the ground. They play tipcat too, but their game is more difficult than ours. 'Knuckle-bones' and a guessing game, played with the fingers, like the Italian Mora, are also favourite amusements.

Another game is 'tiger trap.' To play it, a number of boys and girls take hands and stand in two lines, facing each other. One waits at the end of the double row of children and bleats, as a kid does in a trap set for Mr Stripes. Then the tiger darts in between the lines to catch the kid. The moment he does so, the children at the ends close up. Unless the tiger bounces out very quickly he is caught and the kid runs away.

There are several kinds of blind man's buff. One is called 'Catching fishes in the dark.' Each child chooses the name of a fish, calling himself dragon-shrimp, squid, red chicken, or some other kind of fish. The boy who is to be 'he' is blinded. Then the fishes run past, trying to touch the blind man as they go. If one gets caught 'he' must name it rightly. If 'he' names the wrong fish, away runs the boy. Another kind is 'Call the chickens home.' In this game the blind man says 'Tsoo, tsoo, come seek your mother,' then the other children, who are the chickens, run up and try to touch him without being caught. If one is caught he becomes blind man.

When playing 'Eating fishes' heads and tails,' several children take hold of each other's jackets to form the fish. The first one is the head, which is supposed to be too fierce to be captured; the last one is the tail which may be seized and eaten. One of the players stands by himself. Suddenly he begins to chase the fish, trying to catch its tail. Every time he makes a rush the head of the fish faces round, and the players, forming the tail, swing to one side to avoid being caught, as in our 'Fox and chickens.'

Kite flying is an amusement of which boys as well as grown men are very fond. Little toddlers begin with tiny kites, cleverly made out of folded paper, but the older boys are more ambitious. Some of their kites are made to look like birds and have a bow, strung with a thin flat strip of bamboo, tied behind the wings. When the bird rises in the wind it hovers like a living thing, and the strip of bamboo buzzes with a loud humming noise. Others are shaped like butterflies, centipedes, and other creatures. One of the most beautiful kites is shaped like a fish, so as to curve and sway in the air, much as a fish does in water.

There are several games played with cash, one in which the coins are thrown into a hole scooped by the roadside; another in which they are struck against a wall, so as to rebound and fall beside a certain mark on the ground, but these, as a rule, are a kind of gambling.

Here are names of some other games which may interest you: 'Threading the needle'; 'Waiting for the seeker,' a game like 'I spy'; 'Hopping race'; 'Let the prince cross over'; 'Circling the field to catch the rat'; 'The mud turtle' and 'The water demon seeking for a den,' which is played by five children, but otherwise is like 'Puss in the corner.'

'Sawing wood' is just 'Cat's cradle' under another name.

The children often play at 'worshipping the idols.' For a few cash they buy a painted clay idol, about two inches high, which they carry on a small bamboo stool, by means of two sticks. One child goes in front, one behind, with the ends of the sticks upon their shoulders. Others beat a tiny brass gong and carry a burning stick of incense. Then they offer a shrimp, a small fish and some other things as a sacrifice.

In the warm weather you may be sure that the boys and girls take a large share in the fun when their fathers and brothers send up fire-balloons. These rise in the night sky until they look like yellow moons floating over the city. Sometimes a balloon catches fire, flames for a minute, and then only a falling spark shows where its ashes go tumbling to the ground.

The Chinese have many riddles which grown people as well as children play at guessing.

Here are some for you to try your wits upon.

"It was born in a mountain forest. It died in an earthen chamber. Its soul dispersed to the four winds. And its bones are laid out for sale."

"In a very small house there live five little girls."

"On his head he has a helmet. His body is covered with armour. Kill him and you will find no blood, open him and you will find his flesh."

"On the outside is a stone wall. In the inside there is a small golden lady."

"It takes away the courage of a demon. Its sound is like that of thunder. It frightens men so that they drop their chopsticks. When one turns one's head round to look at it, lo! it is all turned into smoke."

"There are two sisters of equal size; one sits inside, the other outside."

CHILDREN AT FOOD AND AT PLAY

" In the front are five openings; on the sides are two windows; behind hangs an onion stalk."

" What is it that sits very low and eats more grass than a buffalo? "

Here are the answers: Charcoal, a shoe, a shrimp, an egg, a cannon, a looking-glass, a Chinaman's head, a Chinese kitchen range (which is generally heated with fern and grass).

Sometimes riddles are painted on lanterns and hung in front of a shop for people to guess: whoever succeeds in guessing right wins a small prize.

Chinese boys and girls have a sweet tooth. Whenever they have cash to do so, they buy sugar-cane, peanut candy and biscuits, some of which are flavoured with sugared kui flowers, which give them a delicious taste. When the man who sells candied peaches and other fruit appears, boys and girls come hopping out of the houses at the sound of his bell, and each one hunts in his little pocket for cash, or begs a few from his mother, to buy some favourite dainty.

The children are filled with glee whenever a feast with plays is given at their home. They are not allowed to sit at the feast, nor are they supposed to look on at the plays, but they have a good share of what is going. As the unfinished dishes are carried from the tables, one after the other, the servants and children have a feast of their own outside. Long before the plays begin, the children watch the erection of the stage in the court or in the street outside the house, and examine the masks and dresses as they are taken out of their boxes and hung up ready for use.

When the music strikes up they choose knowing corners, from which to peep past the shoulders and over the heads of the big people. They love to see the actors dressed like famous heroes who lived long ago,

although they cannot recognise the boys now beneath their red and black masks, long beards and rich robes. How the music clamours and the drums beat and the rattles clatter. Warriors shout and stamp, fine ladies wave their fans. When fighting begins upon the stage it would be difficult indeed to catch the boys among the crowd, to send them to bed!

CHAPTER VII

STORIES AND RIMES

ONE of the best ways to know boys and girls is to learn something of the stories they like to hear and tell. Here are one or two which will help you to understand our friends the Chinese children much better than pages of talk about their looks and ways.

First, there is the story of how the yellow cow and the water buffalo exchanged their skins. You must know that the yellow cow has a fold of skin which hangs loose beneath her neck, and a loud bellow, while the buffalo has a tight grey skin, that looks some sizes too small for his great round body, and a tiny wheezing voice, which sounds strangely coming from so large a beast. Long ago the buffalo was yellow and his skin fitted well enough, while the cow was grey. Now it happened that one hot day the cow and the buffalo went to bathe in the river, leaving their clothes upon the bank, while they enjoyed themselves in the cool, green water. Presently there was a roar, which told them that the tiger was coming. Out of the water they dashed, and the cow, being the nimbler of the two, scrambled up the bank ahead of the buffalo. In her

haste she picked up the first heap of clothes which she came to and began putting them on, hopping into them one leg at a time between the steps as she ran. The buffalo was not far behind, but so frightened lest the tiger should catch him, that he did not notice that the cow had run off with his clothes. He picked up hers and struggled into them somehow, then he ran for his life. He never was very bright, but blown by running and frightened though he was, he soon noticed that his jacket was very tight and that it was the wrong colour. There was the cow running in front of him, and he could see that she had put on his nice yellow suit. He wished her to stop and give him back his clothes, but the tiger was somewhere in the woods not far behind them. So they ran and they ran until at last they were safe from pursuit.

As the cow slowed her pace the buffalo overtook her. Before he had quite made up to her he tried to shout out, " Give me back my clothes," but he felt so tight and puffed so hard that he could not speak. He was very stiff about the ribs and a little angry, so instead of attempting a long sentence he tried to say, " Oan," one word only, which means " change." All he could get out, however, was " Eh-ah, eh-ah," in a wheezy little voice.

The cow understood his meaning well enough, but she felt so comfortable in her new yellow skin that she only answered " M-ah, m-ah," " I won't, I won't."

And so the buffalo has been wheezing " Change, change," and the yellow cow has been mooing " I won't, I won't," ever since.

Here is another ' just-so ' story, which tells how the deer lost his tail. Long ago an old man and his wife lived in a lonely cottage upon a hill not far from forests and rocky places where wild beasts had their holes.

One night, when the man and his wife had finished their supper, they were talking together, as they often did before going to bed. In the course of their talk the old man happened to say: " How happy we are in our cottage upon this hill far from the city where thieves and beggars bother and policemen frighten people. We do not fear thieves nor policemen, nor tigers nor demons, nor anything at all, unless it be the Lio—yes, we need not fear anything but the Lio."

There was a hush in the cottager's voice when he spoke the last words, and when he had spoken them, both he and his wife were quiet for quite a long time. Now it chanced that a tiger, which had crept down from his cave under one of the blue peaks of the mountain overhead, was prowling round the cottage whilst they were talking together, hoping to pick up the watch-dog or a fat pig, before setting out for a hunt in the valleys far below. Hearing the sound of voices, he stopped outside the door. The family dog, who was far too wise to be out at night near the edge of the forest, smelt him and crept into the corner of the room furthest from the door, under the bedstead. He dared not growl or whimper. There he lay, his brown hair bristling over his shoulders, and he breathed so quietly that the young mice in their hole by the wall were sure that he was dead, although their little grey mother knew better.

At the moment the tiger began to listen to the talking inside the cottage the old man was saying: " We not do fear thieves nor policemen, nor tigers nor demons, nor anything at all, unless it be the Lio." There was something in the way he spoke the last words and in the way he stopped after saying them, which showed that he really was afraid of the Lio. The tiger, who had never heard of a Lio, wondered what it

could be, so he lay down quietly outside the door to listen, hoping to hear more about the terrible beast which frightened people brave enough to fear neither tigers nor thieves nor demons. All was dark and the hill side was very still. Behind the cottage a thief, who had come to rob the lonely couple, was crouching close to the wall. He too heard the old man talking about the Lio and wondered what the terrible creature could be like. Presently he crept round the side of the cottage. The tiger noticed a sound coming moving through the darkness. It was the thief. Though he slipped along as quietly as a pussy cat the tiger heard him with his wonderful wild-beast's ears. Dark as it was when the thief crept round to the front wall, he felt, rather than saw, that there was something lying beside the door of the little house. "Good luck!" he thought to himself. "This is the old man's cow." It was impossible to see, so he stole up gently to try to find out what the creature might be. He put out his hand to feel, and touched the tiger. In a moment he knew that this was no cow. Its hair was harsh and its muscles like iron bands. Could it be—surely it could not be—the dreadful creature of which he had just been hearing. Reckless as he was, the thief felt his heart stand still. Next moment he jumped to one side, climbed the wall of the cottage, and hid on the roof.

Meantime the tiger, making sure that the unseen thing, which had come upon him in the darkness, was nothing less than the Lio itself, got up and fled. He ran and he ran, until he met a deer in the forest. The deer drew respectfully to the side of the path, as in duty bound when meeting his betters. "Where does his Excellency come from in such a hurry?" he inquired in rather a timid voice.

"Oh! from nowhere, from nowhere at all,"

answered the tiger, a little bit confused by what had just happened. Then he recovered himself and told the deer how a terrible beast, called the Lio, had touched him in the dark.

" A Lio, your Excellency! Why, I never even heard of a Lio," said the deer in great surprise. " What is it like? "

" A Lio is very clever," said the tiger; " it climbs houses and comes on you in the dark. If you would like to know more about it I will take you to where it is. Come, let us go together."

" But the Lio will catch me, your Excellency, I am but a weak creature," said the deer, drawing back a little, for he did not wish to be gobbled up. He never had known the tiger so quiet and polite before, and he could see by the gleam of the great green eyes, even in the dark, that his companion was turning his head every now and then, as if he thought the Lio might come gliding through the forest to spring upon them at any moment.

" Don't be afraid," said the tiger, growing braver at the thought of having a companion to go back with him, " I will take care of you."

" But, your Excellency, the Lio will come and you will run away and leave me to be caught," answered the deer.

" Oh, no, we can tie our tails together, and then it will be all right," said the tiger. For you must know that at that time the deer's tail was much longer than it is now.

" Tie our tails together and both get caught at once," gasped the deer, so surprised that he forgot to be polite.

" Not at all," said the tiger, with a little growl in his voice. " When the Lio comes I will ' put forth my

strength' and pull you away with a whisk before it can get hold of you."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the deer, his spotted sides shaking until the white marks danced again, "what a clever plan."

So the deer and the tiger tied their tails together, and set off to look for the Lio. They had to walk carefully through the forest, because the bushes and trees would get between them, and as they went along they talked in whispers about the Lio, until the deer felt creepy all over. At last they reached the edge of the wood, where they could just make out the black cottage looking very dark against the sky. A branch cracked as they passed under the last tree.

The thief, who was still crouching on the roof of the cottage, took fright at the sound, and making sure that the terrible beast he had heard of was coming back, jumped down from the tiles, narrowly missing the deer as he reached the ground.

"Help, help, your Excellency, the Lio!" cried the deer, terrified by something, he knew not what, coming tumbling out of the night. The tiger 'put forth his strength' and gave a great spring, when crack! the deer's tail broke off close by the root. The thief ran, the tiger sprang, the deer bounded away, in different directions, each thinking that the terrible Lio was close at his heels. But the Lio none of them ever saw. What was strangest of all, the old man and his wife, who never had seen a Lio in all their lives, went quietly to bed that night without an idea of what was happening outside in the dark. And now you know why the deer has only a white tuft sticking up, where his beautiful long tail used to be.

The following story about a bird is a favourite one with boys and girls in some parts of China.

There is a little grey bird, called the Bean bird, which pipes a sad note in the spring. Its cry is said to be like the Chinese words for " Little brother, little brother, are you there? " According to the story a man, who had one son, married again and had another little boy. The second son's mother hated the elder brother and wished very much to get rid of him so that her own child might enjoy the family property. Again and again she did her best to get the poor lad into trouble with his father, and too often she succeeded.

One day in spring when the farmers were busy putting their crops into the ground she found some beans in a flat basket with which the elder brother was going to sow his field. The boy was nowhere to be seen, so she popped his beans into the empty rice boiler, and putting some grass into the fireplace below, heated them until those tiny parts which turn into buds and sprout under the soil were killed. Then she put the beans back into their basket and left them to cool. The boy knew nothing of all this, but the younger son, who dearly loved his elder brother, noticed what had been done, and hoping to save him a scolding, quietly put his own beans into the basket and took the roasted ones to use himself. Then they went to the fields and each one sowed his plot of ground. After a time their mother sent the boys to see how the crops were doing. " If the beans have not sprouted in either of your fields you need not come home again," said she. " We do not wish to have useless, lazy children in this house."

The elder brother's little field was covered with green plants, so he went gleefully home and told his stepmother. The younger brother's plot was brown and bare, not a bean had come up through the soil. He knew there would be trouble for his brother if he went home, so he started off for the mountains, hoping

that his elder brother would be left in peace if he were gone. He wandered away and away, until at length a tiger found him and ate him up.

The stepmother was vexed when her son did not come home from the fields, and with many threats and angry speeches sent the elder boy to go and look for him. The lad, who was anxious to find his companion, went everywhere calling, " Little brother, little brother, are you there? " The workers on the upland farms and the grass-cutters on the hills, heard his voice floating faint and far, as he wandered farther and farther away. Now it was here, now there, always calling the same sad cry, " Little brother, little brother, are you there? "

When he could find him nowhere he knelt down in his despair and prayed Heaven to show him where his brother was. As he prayed and wept he knocked his head upon the ground. His head struck a stone, the blood ran and he died. The blood which flowed from his wound was changed into a little grey bird, and every year, when the beans are sprouting in the fields, the bird comes with its plaintive cry, now near, now far, " Little brother, little brother, are you there? " When the children hear its call they say, " Rain is coming," and surely enough the drops begin to fall before long, as if the skies remembered an ancient wrong and wept for sorrow.

There are many stories of children famous in China long ago. Here is one which shows how even a little child may care for others, thinking and acting wisely in time of danger.

Many hundreds of years ago, in the time of the Sung Dynasty, a boy named Sze Ma Kung was playing with some other boys and girls. When the fun was at its height, one of the party fell into a great big jar of

water. The children were so frightened that they all ran away, except Sze Ma Kung, who at once went to try what he could do to save his companion. The edge of the jar was too high for him to reach over, so the little fellow could not get at the sinking child, to pull him out of the water. There was no time to fetch a stool or call for help; another moment and the prisoner would be drowned. A good idea struck him. He rushed off, and picking up as large a stone as he could carry he dashed it against the side of the jar. Crack went the pot and a great hole opened, through which the water all ran away. Then the child crept out like a half-drowned puppy, but not much the worse for his drenching. When people heard of what Sze Ma Kung had done, they knew that if he lived to grow up he would be a useful man, wise and thoughtful and quick to help others.

Stories are told of children diligent at their books, who were famous in after life. One lad, who was too poor to buy oil for his lamp, used to catch fire-flies and read by the pale-green light they gave. He put the fire-flies inside a tiny muslin bag, which he laid upon the page of his book, the light which they gave being just enough to let him follow his lesson, line by line. Another used to read by the light reflected from snow, as the day failed, or when the moon rose. A third used to fasten his book to the horn of the cow he was tending, so as to use the precious hours for study; while a fourth tied his queue to a rafter of the low roof above his head, so that when he became drowsy and nodded over his lesson, he might be wakened by the pain of having his hair pulled.

Another kind of story helps to fix the written ' characters ' in schoolboys' memories. One of these tells how a scholar, called Li An-i, went to visit a rich boor

named Ti Shing. When he reached the house and asked for the gentleman, a message was brought that he was not at home. Li An-i knew that this was not true, so he wrote the character for 'afternoon' on the door of Mr Ti's house and went away. When asked why he had done so, he said that the character for afternoon meant 'the ox not putting out its head.' When you know that the character for afternoon is the same as the one for ox, but without the dot which makes the head of it, and that a stupid person is called an ox in China, much as he would be called an ass at home, you will understand Mr Li's joke. He meant that the man, who had not 'put out his head' to see him, was a stupid ox.

There are plenty of nursery rimes in China, one or two of which will show you that Chinese children are very much like our own. Here is one about our old friends the sparrows.

"A pair of sparrows with four bright eyes,
Four small feet that pop, pop so,
Four wings whirr, whirr, how they go!
Pecking rice and grain likewise."

Another reminds us a little of the pig that would not get over the stile.

"A bit of copper fell out of the sky,
And hit an old man as he passed by.
When the man began to jog,
He struck against a dog.
When the dog began to yell,
It struck against a mill.
When the mill began to fall,
It struck against a hall.
When the hall began to build,
It struck against a stool.
When the stool began to sit,
It struck against a sheet.
When the sheet began to tuck,
It struck against a duck.

When the duck began to wade,
It struck against a blade.
When the blade began to cut,
It struck against a hat.
When the hat began to wear,
Catch the thief and slit his ear."

The following verse, which is often shouted by boisterous little scholars, pokes fun at a greedy schoolmaster, who has lost the respect of his pupils. The first and third lines are from the *Three Character Classic*, the first book a child learns; the others are hits at the master.

"'Primal man's condition,'
Teacher sly steals chicken.
'Good at root was his heart,'
Teacher's nicking gizzard.
The boys won't touch a book,
Roll teacher in the brook."

The boys and girls of China are learning the stories of Joseph, Samuel and Jonathan, of John the Baptist and of Peter. They read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Jessica's First Prayer*, *Christie's Old Organ* and many another favourite, which has been put into the Chinese language for them by the missionaries. Best of all they learn the story of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through it come to know the Blessed Saviour Himself.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION

It is rather strange that the Chinese have three religions, instead of being contented with one like most people. Confucianism is the chief of these. It takes

its name from Confucius, a wise man born in 551 B.C., who taught men to be just, to be kind to one another, and to agree together; but he said little or nothing about how to know God and worship Him. The most famous saying of Confucius is: " What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others." These beautiful words are nearer to the teaching of Our Lord Jesus than anyothers to be found outside the Bible, and ought to be treasured by everyone. Following in the steps of the earlier teachers of China, Confucius taught children to reverence their parents, and in this way he printed the spirit of the Fifth Commandment upon the entire nation. We must remember, however, that Confucius did not begin what is called Confucianism, he only handed on truths which the early Chinese had learnt. Indeed some things, such as the knowledge of God, and of a future life, he taught less clearly than those who had gone before him.

A story is told which shows that, wise as Confucius was, he did not know everything. One day, when out for a walk he found two boys quarrelling. " What are you two quarrelling about? " asked the great man.

One of the boys answered, " The sun. I say that when the sun has just risen it is nearest to us."

" I say that it is nearest to us at noon," insisted the other.

" When the sun rises it looks as big as a chariot wheel. When it is high it is quite small, no larger than a saucer. It is plain that when things are far away they look small, and when they are close to us they look big," said the first youth.

" When the sun rises," objected the second boy, " it is chill and cold. When the sun is overhead it is as hot as boiling water. Plainly it is cold when it is

far away and hot when it is near, so it is nearer to us at noon than it is in the morning."

When Confucius had heard each of them in turn, he did not know what to say, so he went on with his walk and left them. Then the two boys laughed, and one of them exclaimed: "Who are the people that say that the Sage of the kingdom of Lo is a wise man?"

While Confucius lived, few of his fellow-countrymen would listen to him. The princes, whom he tried to teach to govern wisely, made him sorrowful by refusing to follow his advice. On the last day of his life he was very sad and dragged himself about, slowly saying over and over again to himself:

"The great mountain must crumble,
The strong beam must break,
And the wise man wither away like a plant."

But his labours were not lost. His wise words were put into a book by his followers, more than a hundred years after his death. Mencius, the greatest of his disciples, carried on his work. His fame spread all over China and far beyond it. Now there are 1500 temples in which he is worshipped by millions of people, and so great is the honour given to him that his followers say:

"Confucius! Confucius!
Great indeed art thou, O Confucius.
Before thee
None like unto thee;
After thee
None equal to thee.
Confucius! Confucius!
Great indeed art thou, O Confucius."

Confucius told the Chinese people that the most precious teaching handed down to them from long ago was that which taught them to honour their parents and those older than themselves. But both before and after the time of this great man, the Chinese went too

far, not only reverencing, but also worshipping the dead. Perhaps we can imagine how this mistake crept in. They were afraid that they might forget their loved ones. Since it was not the custom with them long ago to put names upon gravestones, they wrote them in books and on slips of wood. These slips of wood, or ancestral tablets, were kept most carefully, as we have already seen, in the chief room of the house and in temples. The Chinese believed that each person had three souls, one which went into the unseen world at death, one which stayed in the grave, and one which lived in the slip of wood. They also thought that the souls in tablets or in graves depended on dutiful sons to offer food and sacrifices to them. Girls might not make these offerings, because, when married, they belonged to their husbands' families. When parents had no baby boys, they were much troubled, not having anyone to grow up and worship their spirits, for they fear more than anything else to become ' hungry demons ' after death, with no one to care for their needs. Now you know why Chinese people are anxious to have sons rather than daughters.

Fear mixes with the worship of the dead at every turn. When people are sick or lose money or have some other trouble, they think that the spirits in the tablets are angry, and are bringing evil upon their home. They offer food, and burn paper clothes, houses, money, servants and horses to please them, thinking that when burnt, those things pass into the spirit-land, where their relatives enjoy them, and being pleased, give up troubling those on earth.

A man named Wang had sickness in his family and his business was not good. A priest told him that his father's spirit, which lived in a red and green

tablet, was angry with him, and he must offer paper money, incense and other things to pacify it. He offered these things, and fruit, chickens, cakes and pork besides; but all to no purpose, things went just as badly as ever. At last, after spending all his money in this way, he lost faith in the priest and in the tablet. "My father was not unkind to me when he was alive," said he, "why should his spirit plague me so wickedly when he is dead?" About this time he first heard the Gospel, and in despair of finding comfort elsewhere, began to go to church. He heard that he had a Father in Heaven, and found peace and gladness in His service. This worship of the spirits of the dead is the real religion of China; all the rest of their beliefs are things added on. The fear of those who have gone into the unseen world hangs like a weight upon the people, who are said to spend millions of money every year in trying to please the spirits of their relatives.

Sad as this is, we ought to remember that there is something beautiful and right hidden beneath all that is wrong in this worship, and that is the desire of the Chinese people to reverence and obey those who have gone before them. When they have learned to serve God, what is wrong will pass away, and perhaps they will teach us all to understand the real meaning of the Fifth Commandment better than we have yet done.

In spite of the good in it, Confucianism has been a failure, because it has not taught men and women and children to know the one true God, who alone can help them to follow the teaching of Confucius and be just and kind and obedient.

Taoism, as it is called, is the second religion of China. Its founder is called Lao-tsze or 'old boy.' It is said that he was old and wise and had white hair when he

was born. After serving his country for a time, he gave up his post and travelled towards the west. At the frontier pass of Han Kuh, the officer in charge of the gate stopped the traveller, and knowing that he was a wise man, persuaded him to write down some of his teaching in a book. Taoism takes its name from Tao, the truth, or the way, the first syllable in the name of the Tao-teh-king, the famous volume which Lao-tsze wrote; but what is now called Taoism does not follow the teaching of this book.

'The Heavenly Master,' or pope of the Taoists, lives in the Dragon-tiger mountain in Kiangsi. He has rows of jars, in which the people think he keeps evil spirits shut up, like the Djinn whom the fisherman of the *Arabian Nights* found sealed in a copper vessel. There are Taoist priests in every city of China, who sometimes may be seen in red and yellow robes with a curious topknot of yellow wood tied into their hair, going through strange rites, or cracking a whip with a long lash to frighten away demons. The Taoist god most feared by the people is the Kitchen God, who they think goes up to heaven once a year, and tells what each member of the family has been doing during the twelve months.

Buddhism, which is an Indian religion, entered China in 217 B.C., and was welcomed by the emperor of that time. It was afterwards persecuted, but later spread over the country. Now, practically all the people are Buddhists, as well as Confucianists and Taoists. The teaching of Confucius, as we have already seen, leaves men and women without a Saviour or strength to do the good they know. That is why, when Buddhism came into the land, the Chinese welcomed it, hoping that it might aid them. But though Buddhism tells men to be true, pure, humble, courageous, it does not

lead them, any more than did Confucianism, to a personal God, who might help them to do what they were told was right. It leaves them to their own efforts and points to no one able to save from sin. It tells people that if they conquer their bodies and give up doing wrong things, not taking life or eating animal food, they will after death be born again in a new and higher life. If, when born again, they do still better, they will be born still higher, until at last they enter Nirvana, the Buddhist heaven, "as the dewdrops slip into the shining sea."

If, on the other hand, people do wrong things, the Buddhists say they will be born again as lower animals, dogs, rats or creeping snakes.

There are many idols connected with these religions, and everywhere you may see people going to the temples to burn incense and paper money, and to offer gifts of food. They do not go regularly, as people go to church in Christian lands, but on idols' birthdays or when they themselves are in trouble.

Year by year more of the people turn from their own religions to the peace and happiness of serving God. In Our Lord Jesus Christ they find forgiveness of sins, and for the first time strength to follow all that is good in the teaching of their own ancient Sages.

CHAPTER IX

FESTIVALS

CHINESE life, which for many children is dull and full of work, has its red-letter days. No description of the little folk of the Middle Kingdom would be complete

without an account of some of the festivals, which add so much to the happiness of the year.

How the boys and girls look forward to New Year's day! The houses are swept and tidied the night before. Inscriptions on bright red paper are pasted on the door-posts and lintels of each home. What a banging of guns and crackers there is, in the early morning, after the ancestors have been worshipped. The pavement is littered with red and white paper, wherever fireworks have been let off. A little later, the streets are full of people going to call on their friends, and say " I congratulate you, I congratulate you," for this is the way in which the Chinese wish each other a Happy New Year.

The children are dressed in new clothes, their queues and little plaits of hair being tied with fresh red cord. They have new shoes and new hats and a handful of cash to rattle in their pockets. The babies are as gay as humming-birds, in bright coloured jackets and trousers, pussy-faced shoes, silver bangles, and wonderful embroidered crowns and collars.

The shops are closed, everyone is either resting or holiday-making. The streets are lined with gambling-boards. One hears the clatter of bamboo lot-sticks and the rattle of dice everywhere as one passes along. Boys and girls make for the cake man's tray. They buy candy and fruit and toys; they jump and dance and play, and enjoy life hugely. The holidays continue for two weeks. There are plays and feasts in the evenings, and plenty of crackers are fired. The children wish that the fun might go on for ever. On the fifteenth of the month the holidays are closed by the festival of lanterns.

For several days before this feast the streets have been gay with beautiful lanterns of many shapes and

sizes. Some are made of glass, with flowers and birds of paper pasted over them, or painted in bright colours. Some are made of crinkled paper, round like melons, or jar-shaped; others resemble fishes, lions, castles, rabbits, lotus flowers, white and red, tigers, dragons. They are all colours—red, green, white, blue, pink, yellow, purple. The kind which the little boys like best are 'throwing-ball lanterns,' which are made by pasting bits of different coloured paper on a frame of thin bamboo. Inside there is a tiny clay dish, filled with fat, into which a wick is stuck. When the evening is dark enough, out come the boys. They light their lanterns. Some have big tiger and fish lanterns, which move on wooden wheels, the fire shining through their eyes and bodies. Some prance along in a row, each with a bit of a long dragon on his shoulder. The first boy carries the head, and the last one has the tail. The dragon bobs and twists as they thread the crowded street. Some whirl their 'ball lanterns' round and round, by means of a string tied to the top. The wicks keep alight because the lump of fat does not run out of the socket as oil would do. The bright colours gleam as the light shines out, and the lanterns whirl flashing through the dark.

Then there is the spring festival, when troops of people go out of the east gate of the city to see the mandarins worship at an altar to the Earth God, which has the figure of a buffalo standing beside it. People throw things at the buffalo; whoever hits it is sure that he will have a prosperous year.

Then comes the Tsing-Ming, or feast of tombs, when schools have holiday. Steamed cake, brown and white, and vegetables rolled in pancakes are eaten in every house. People put the family graves in order. Sacrifices are made, paper money is strewed upon the

GOING TO VISIT HIS IDOL MOTHER

earth and crackers are fired. Tiny boys are taken to the graves, that they may learn how to tend them, and present the offerings by and by when older. Boys, lads and young men line the banks of the river, or some other open space near the town or village, and throw stones at one another. The stones fly fast, dashing up spray where they strike the water. Now one side has the better in the fight, now the other. The game becomes serious indeed when someone is struck and the blood flows. Many people go to look on, believing that if the battle goes on until blood has been drawn, the village will be free of sickness during the year.

In some cities a children's festival is held about the beginning of summer, when the little ones are carried to the temple of one of the goddesses and devoted to her. Those taken for the first time go through a little ceremony. Some money is paid to the nuns in charge of the temple, and the infants become the adopted children of the idol. After being adopted, the children go every year to the temple until the age of sixteen is reached, when they again pay a sum of money and give up attending. The little ones and their friends enjoy these festivals. From early until late, streams of people pour in by the city gates and flood the streets. The children are most gay, dressed in silk and satin. Some wear the robe, hat, belt and boots of an official; some wear delicate robes of green, blue, pink, crimson, apple-green; some have head-dresses embroidered with flowers and spangled with tiny mirrors; some wear antique crowns adorned with pheasants' feathers; some are dressed as old men riding on water buffaloes to represent Lao-tsze on his journey to the west; others again are in uniform and képi, after the fashion of the new army.

Many of the children are mounted on horses, over which coloured cloths are thrown. The collar-bells chime and jingle as the animals are led along. The crush at the temple gates is great. The little people dismount, and with others who have been brought pick-a-back, are carried into the presence of the idols. Their parents buy red candles and offer long sticks of incense, and go through the temple making the children bow towards the altar. The horses are mounted once more and carry their gay riders home, where paper money is burnt and plays are acted. In spite of the fact that many children are stolen and lost, or become ill from heat and exposure at these festivals, the foolish people believe that the goddess takes special care of her adopted children.

The fifth day of the fifth moon is the dragon boat festival, when schoolboys present some cash to their teacher, and teachers give a fan with an inscription on it to each of their pupils. The children go with their friends to look at the dragon boats racing. They love to see the paddles splash in the water, to listen to the drums beating and the shouts of the rowers.

The mid-autumn festival comes in the eighth month, when scholars once more give money to their teachers, receiving moon cakes in return. In some districts the children build circular towers of broken tiles, and light fires inside them. Some of these towers are six feet across and several feet high, although the bits of tiles are laid one on the top of the other without cement.

In the eleventh month there is the winter festival, when ancestors are worshipped and feasts and plays are again enjoyed. There are many other holidays and feasts, as, for instance, on the birthdays of the idols, but those above mentioned are the chief festi-

vals to which the boys and girls look forward during the year.

Though Christian children do not join in idolatrous festivals, they have 'ball lanterns' to swing, and cakes to eat, and a good share of fun. When they learn to know and love the Saviour, they find true and lasting joy, better far than that which heathen boys and girls know.

Sunday is the Christian holiday, when the little ones wear bright clothes and join the happy throng which gathers at church. They love to sing the hymns and take part in the Bible services by answering questions and saying the golden text, chosen for each Sunday.

CHAPTER X

SUPERSTITIONS

THE superstitions of China are countless, and of course differ in different parts of the Empire, but you will like to hear of some that touch the lives of the boys and girls.

When boys and girls are born, their fortunes are told. The baby's father gets the child's 'eight characters' written down on a piece of paper. Two of the 'characters' tell the year, two the month, two the day and two the hour when the little one came into this world; these he takes to the man who 'looks at people's lives,' who he believes can tell from them whether the child will be fortunate or unhappy in this world. This fortune-teller, who is very often blind, has a great deal to do with baby's fate. If,

for instance, he says that fire enters into its disposition, and someone else in the family has a fortune connected with wood, then the child will surely bring bad fortune to that person, for fire burns wood. The people believe what the blind man says, and so poor little baby is given away, or even in some cases put to death, to prevent its bringing trouble upon the family. When baby grows older it is supposed to be in danger from wicked spirits. Little gilt idols are put in its cap, to frighten away these demons, a favourite figure being that of a roly-poly bald idol, called 'Fat Strength.' When a little older, a tiny round tray, foot-measure and pair of scissors are sewn on the front band of its cap, for the same purpose. Coins, charms of copper and silver, and little square bags of incense powder, with the names of idols written on them, are also hung round children's necks to keep away the evil spirits.

If a little one takes ill the father sometimes begs one cash from a hundred different people among his neighbours and friends. With these coins he has a chain made to go round the child's neck and a padlock to fasten it tightly. In this way he hopes, poor man, to fasten baby's soul firmly to its body, and so prevent it from dying. If, in spite of this, baby gets worse, its father thinks some idol is enticing its soul away from its little body. After finding out which idol is probably the thief, he takes one of the child's little garments and puts it into an empty basket, which has a length of dry straw rope tied round it. Then he goes to the temple, and, after offering things which he thinks will please the idol, and make it willing to let baby's spirit go again, he spreads out the little jacket, believing that the tiny soul will recognise its own garment and get into it. Then he puts the garment carefully into his basket and lights the straw rope that

it may burn slowly, and lead the little wandering spirit safely home.[1]

In some places the father goes about with the tiny jacket hung on the end of a stick, calling baby's name aloud, hoping to find the little wandering spirit in this way.

Boys and girls early come to know the stone lions, which stand opposite points where straight lanes or streets enter other streets, or in front of temples and yamens. These curious images have broad noses and tufted manes and tails. Some crouch close against a block in a wall, with round eyes and long teeth, looking as if they were going to walk out of the stone. Many have their heads on one side, with a double string hanging down from their mouths. Some have a baby lion in front of them or a carved ball under one paw. A few have a ball inside their stone jaws and some are crouching as if to spring. The children are told that these stone lions stand in front of houses to prevent evil spirits or ghosts from coming along the lane to hurt people inside. They say that in the middle of the night the lions come down from their stone pedestals and play about the streets with their balls, rolling over and over one another! One lion, which was supposed to change himself into a man and roam about the streets, has been caged with bars and is kept safely shut up in a little temple of his own in Chinchew.

Then children are also told that coffins, which have been shone upon by the moon, turn into ghosts and walk about the streets, trying to catch people. They think there are demons who call and howl whenever anyone is going to die. They say, too, that the spirits

[1] The Chinese say that man's day is the spirit's night, that is why a burning rope, or candles, or a lantern, are used at such times, and when worshipping in temples during the day.

of drowned people turn into duck demons, which swim near the edge of ponds. If anyone is foolish enough to try to catch them, they drag him under the water and drown him. The drowned man then becomes the duck demon, and the first man can escape. Then children are told of serpent demons and foxes that turn into people, and bring hurt to those who take them into their houses. A famous story is that of a man who met a beautiful lady and married her. One day he came home rather sooner than his wife expected him, and could not find her anywhere. At last he peeped through a hole in an old shed, and there he saw a hideous demon, painting its skin, which was stretched on a board. Looking at the skin the man saw that it was his wife's, and so knew he had married a fox-demon and not a woman. "If you could stretch your hand three feet above your head you would touch the spirits," is a common saying.

Fork-like prongs stick out from the roofs of the houses to drive away demons. Streets and roads often, for no reason, turn a sharp corner, and the furrows ploughed in the fields are awry, so that the spirits may lose their way and not come along them to hurt people. They think there are spirits of the door and spirits under the eaves, spirits of the rafters and spirits of the bed.

Sometimes you will see a head with a shining sword in its mouth above a door; sometimes a sword, made of round brass cash, tied together by a red cord, hangs in a bedroom. If a wicked spirit comes to hurt anyone inside the room the spirit of the sword is supposed to flash out and drive it away.

In the hills and waters, in graves and in houses, in great stones and in old trees, in the moon and in the stars, there are, the Chinese say, spirits and spiritual

influences. There is the earth spirit in the ground and there are dragons which may be made very angry if the soil is dug too deeply. If an earth dragon is angry and moves his tail, half a city may fall down. There are dragons too of air and water. When an eclipse took place, the people used always to go out with drums and pans and brass gongs to frighten away the Celestial Dog, which they thought was eating up the sun or moon. In 1909, however, when the Prince Regent was asked to give orders for the usual ceremonies to drive away an eclipse, he refused, saying that now these foolish ways must cease.

Numbers of superstitious practices are connected with the idols. The spirits inside them are supposed to eat the spirit of the food offered upon the altar. Inside some of the images there is a mirror, in which the idol is supposed to see all that passes before it. On certain days idols are carried through cities and villages and round the fields to let them see how their worshippers are faring. On great festivals men may be seen bare to the waist, with their hair floating down their backs, and thin, flat swords in their hands. The spirit of the idol is thought to enter these men. They foam at the mouth, they whirl round and rush about, they cut themselves, striking wildly over their shoulders with their swords. Though they do not wound themselves badly, yet thin streaks of red show where the skin is cut. Guns are fired and piles of paper money send up clouds of smoke. The 'mediums,' as these men may be called, put their swords between their teeth and leap on to the carrying poles of the idols' sedan-chair, and thus standing behind the image, they are carried through the streets.

Chinese boys and girls are also taught to believe that the spirits of the idols go into women, who turn

very white and ill-looking, and then begin to speak in a strange, thin, muttering voice. The people think that when the idol spirit is in these women, they can bring dead people back to speak to their friends and children, just as the witch of Endor brought back Samuel to speak to Saul.

In southern China, a man named It-sai-peh, who was a Christian, died before his wife had learned to believe in God. His widow was very sad when he died, and wished to burn money, clothes, houses, servants, horses and other things, all made of paper, so that the spirit of all these things should be of use to her husband in the unseen world. Before going to the expense, however, she went to ask one of these women, who was said to be a spirit medium, whether she ought to make the offerings or not.

"Shall I make offerings for It-sai-peh's soul?" asked the widow.

"It-sai-peh is in heaven," said the woman, "he does not need your offerings."

It was a strange answer for the witch to make, but it did good, for It-sai-peh's widow was much comforted; she did not waste her money on useless offerings, but she went to church to hear the doctrine which had saved her husband, and in time herself believed in Christ.

In addition to consulting these idol mediums, people often go to the temples to cast lots themselves, and to divine. They first offer incense and paper money, then they tell the idol what they want to do, and ask it whether they may do so or not. After this they take two curved bamboo roots, round on one side and flat on the other. They wave these before the image, and then throw them down upon the floor. If the two round sides or the two flat sides turn upwards,

that means *No*, but if one round side and one flat side are uppermost, that means *Yes*. They throw three times; and twice yes, or twice no, settles the matter. Sometimes they go to certain temples or shrines to sleep, in the hopes that the idols will tell them in a dream the winning number in a lottery, or something else they want very much to know. When they have had the dream they go to someone wise in explaining dreams, to find out its meaning.

The idols are supposed to do strange things at times. Once when the officials were putting out a great fire at Pekin, they said they saw a boy with a red face, in the midst of the flames, helping their men; everywhere the boy went the fire died down, till soon it ceased altogether. Search was made for the useful boy, but he could not be found. Afterwards it was said that in a distant province there was a boy idol, deified when he was eleven years old, represented with a red face, and sitting on a throne. This idol was now honoured with a title and special offerings, because it was believed that he had gone all the way to Pekin to help to put out the fire.

The people think that sometimes idols get down from their seats and go about in the way just described. Here is a story which will make this superstition plain.

In the West Street of a certain Chinese city a man kept a cake shop. The shopkeeper began to notice that very early every morning two chubby children used to bring some cash to buy cakes. What further surprised him was that every night he found some sheets of yellow paper money (such as is offered to idols) at the bottom of the till. Nobody put the paper money into the box, but every night, as surely as he counted over his gains, there was the yellow paper lying at the bottom. Sometimes he wondered whether

this paper money had to do with the boys who came to buy cakes in the morning. But let him watch ever so closely, he never saw them put anything into his till. They brought him good luck, however, for more people came to buy his cakes every day, and he made plenty of pennies. But the cake man could not give up wondering about the paper money, and, at last, he made up his mind that the children certainly had to do with the mystery. Nobody knew where the pair of chubby-cheeked boys came from, or where they went to, and they were not quite like ordinary boys, there was something distinguished in their look and ways.

One day the shopkeeper could restrain his curiosity no longer, so he waited until the boys left the shop, and then he followed them along the pavement, carefully keeping at a distance and noticing where they went. After walking along the West Street for a little distance, they turned up a narrow lane; their pursuer quickened his pace and followed them along the lane, and out into another street, and yet another, until they disappeared round the corner of a small temple. A minute later the inquisitive man followed them. Inside the temple were two images of chubby-faced child idols. The secret was out! The boys were no ordinary children, but idol spirits which had taken to frisking about the city. The secret was out, but the boys came no more to the cake shop. There was no more paper money lying at the bottom of the till at night, and, for some reason, fewer people went to buy cakes, so that the prying shopkeeper's business fell off from that day. That, at least, is the legend.

It would not be easy to tell one hundredth part of the superstitions of a country which has followed heathen ways for so long as China has done. It

may be said that no one can be born, reared, taught, married; no one can study, farm land, keep a shop, work or govern; no one can be doctored or nursed, die or be buried, without numberless superstitious customs, which entangle the lives of the Chinese people as the meshes of a spider's web entangle a fly.

Who is that blind man who strikes a cow's horn with a bit of wood as he walks along? Kok, kok, kok, goes the horn. It is the fortune-teller, upon whose words the fate of so many people depends. There—a woman has stopped him. The sound of the horn is stilled. He leans his head to one side, listening, while his poor, empty eyes stare vacantly. Now he is speaking. You cannot hear his words, for he has lowered his voice. Probably he is telling the old lady her fortune, or advising her about a new daughter-in-law, or some business matter. On we go. There, at a corner of that temple under the shadow of the red brick wall, sits a learned-looking man with wide-rimmed spectacles. He has a table in front of him, on which there are two small cages. Wait a moment and you will see something of interest. Up come some people from the country. You can tell that they are villagers by their new clothes and the circles of silver pins which the girls have stuck in their hair, beside their general look of being on holiday. One of them wishes to have her fortune told. See! the old gentleman has put some slips of folded paper, about the size of playing-cards, upon the table. There are different fortunes written on them. If you looked closely enough at the edge of the folded papers you would see that one of them has a little double fold. But this is a secret of which these country folk know nothing. Now which of the fortunes will be chosen? Wait and you will see. Old Spectacles opens the door of one of the cages and out

hops the most friendly speckled brown bird. He stands in front of the folded papers and looks at them, one after the other, in the wisest way; he turns his head, down dives his clean, black bill. See, he has picked up one of the papers. His master takes the paper and gives birdie a grain of rice before putting him back in his cage. Now he reads off the fortune from the paper and explains its meaning. The country folk are much impressed, especially by the wise bird, and pay their money willingly before they go away. They are so superstitious that they really believe the bird chose their fortune for them, but birdie only picked out the paper with a fold in the edge, because he hoped to find a grain of corn in the crease. If you followed its master home, you would see him constantly teaching his little brown pet to choose the paper with a fold, by putting a grain of rice just inside the crease. So when customers come to have their fortunes told, the bird looks over the papers until it finds the one folded at the edge by the fortune-teller, and then picks it up and gives it to be read by him.

This account of a few of their superstitions will serve to show you in what constant trouble and dread the Chinese children live, for fear of the demons and spirits all round them, because they do not know and trust in God. When living among them one cannot but feel that they are like the people long ago, " who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Yet we may learn something from them too. The constant sense of the unseen world among the Chinese and their dread of offending the invisible spirits, should make us ask ourselves if we remember the unseen God as often, and are as careful not to offend against our loving, watchful Heavenly Father, as they are not to offend the spirits.

CHAPTER XI

REVERENCE FOR PARENTS

"Things difficult to come by are a good son, long life, and a great beard."—*Chinese Proverb.*

THE Chinese say that filial piety is the chief of virtues, and many show by their actions that they believe the saying. They care for their fathers and mothers, obey their wishes, and are careful in the use of their property. "A good son will not use the portion divided for him; a good daughter will not wear her marriage clothes," say the Chinese.

The following story shows how sorry they are when they think that they have offended against their parents in any way. In 1908 a traveller met a young man on his way to a famous temple on the top of a mountain in Hunan. The lad had lost his mother and he was very sad because he thought that her death must have been caused by some wrong thing which he had done, either in this life or in some previous existence. He felt sure that if he had not been guilty of some very wicked action, Heaven never would have taken away his mother whilst he was still so young. In order to make up for what he thought to be his crime, he vowed to walk sixty miles to the temple, bowing down to the ground every seven steps which he took. He must have knelt over 250 times in a mile, or more than 15,000 times in all.

To ill-use one's father or mother is a fault for which there is no forgiveness in China. Some years ago, in one of the cities of the south, a boy who was unkind to his mother and spent his time in gambling, instead

of working for her support, was punished by being buried alive.

The following story shows how much power fathers and mothers have over their children, even when they are grown to be men and women. Once there was a Hunan man, named Chiu, who fought bravely against the 'long-haired rebels,' and rose to high office in the Canton province. His mother, a big woman with unbound feet and a face marked by small-pox, was a person of strong character who had trained her children to be dutiful and always to obey.

Not long after Mr Chiu had gone to Canton, he sent for his mother to come and stay with him in the big house where he now lived. When word was brought that the servants, whom he had sent with his own silk-lined chair for the old lady, were drawing near to the city, Mr Chiu left his retinue and joined them, following his mother's chair on foot as it entered the gateway and passed through the city.

The people, as they usually do when there is anything to be seen, lined the streets, filling every doorway with their eager faces, for men, women and children had turned out to see the great man welcome his aged mother.

Old Mrs Chiu sat in the sedan, her big feet sticking out from under the silk front covering of the chair. As he walked along beside the bearers, her son noticed how awkward they looked in that position, and gently pushed them inside with his hand.

On went the silken chair with its bearers and escort, the people gazing with interest on all the marks of honour paid by a good son to his mother. Presently the old lady again stuck out her feet, so that they " showed like a pair of boats " on the footboard of the chair beneath the gaze of the whole city. Mr Chiu,

great man as he was, did not dare to push them back again, much as he disliked to have everyone laughing at his mother's big feet.

When the chair reached the Yamen, or official house, Mr Chiu went to help his mother to get out.

" What place is this? " asked the old lady, as if she did not know her son. " What place is this? "

" This is the Yamen, where you are to live, mother," answered Mr Chiu.

" I can have no such happiness," said she. " Go and see whether there is an inn near by, where people cook their own food, that I may go and lodge there."

Mr Chiu, seeing that something had gone wrong, knelt down, careless of his silk clothes and all the crowd of onlookers, and said:

" O mother, I do not know what may have displeased you, but if I have offended you in any way, I ask you to forgive my fault," but his mother would not answer him a word.

Mr Chiu, finding that he could make nothing of the old lady, sent for his wife, hoping that she might persuade her to leave the chair and go into the Yamen. By this time the court was full of people who had gathered to see what was going on. Her Excellency, young Mrs Chiu, came out in her long robes and satin shoes, and kneeling down upon the stone pavement, besought Mrs Chiu, saying:

" What is wrong with you, mother? We do not know why you are so angry with us. Please tell your daughter what is the matter, and why you will not come into the house."

" There can be no such happiness for me," said the old lady shortly, and then she said no more. Young Mrs Chiu's tears fell freely and she began again to beseech her mother-in-law to forgive whatever might have

offended her, and not to shame her son in the eyes of his friends and neighbours.

On this the angry dame left her chair and walked into the midst of the guests and the crowd of onlookers. Then she stamped one of her large feet upon the stones and turning to her son said:

"Your father did not find fault with my feet, who are you to be ashamed of them? My heart is right, therefore Heaven has given me good fortune; looks do not matter." His Excellency bore her anger with grace and patience, and when she had said all she wished to say, at last was able to persuade her to enter the Yamen.

It would be a mistake to think that old Mrs Chiu would not go into her son's house only because she was angry. The Chinese despise the man who is ashamed of his parents or poor relations. The old woman's big feet showed that she had been of the working class. She acted as she did, not from obstinacy or temper, but because she wished that neither she herself nor her distinguished son should be ashamed of their humble beginnings.

The honour paid by children to their parents, such as this story tells of, has kept the better heart of China alive amid much evil, and has made her people more ready to join in the worship of our Father which is in Heaven.

CHAPTER XII

FAITHFULNESS

FAITHFULNESS is another of those things we admire, that are taught to Chinese boys and girls too. Many

are the stories told to make the children honour faithful men and wish to be like them.

One of these tells of Luh Sin Fu, in the time of the Sung Dynasty. This faithful servant of his country, after refusing to be bought over by the Mongols who were then at war with China, was defeated in a sea-fight near Canton. His ships were scattered, and seeing that the hopes of the Sung rulers were lost, he took the baby heir of the throne and jumping overboard perished with him in the waves.

Chinese children are often reminded to be faithful by the books which they read at school: "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles." "Daily I examine myself in regard to three things, whether in doing business for others I may have been unfaithful, whether I may have been insincere with my friends, whether I may not have laid to heart the teachings of my master;" and such lessons are made clear to their minds by the example of men and women praised for faithfulness in every district of the land.

A legend is told in Chinchew city of a family which became famous in the time of the Ming Emperors, through the faithfulness of one of its ancestors. This man, a Mr So, kept a wine-shop in East Street, not far from the magistrate's Yamen. He was an honest citizen, who went about his business in a quiet, steady way. Among his customers was a middle-aged man, who used to go once a day to the shop to have his earthenware bottle filled with wine.

One day this regular customer brought a bundle, which he asked Mr So to keep for him, until he should call for it. Mr So willingly took the bundle, promising to take good care of it. From that moment the man came no more to Mr So's shop. Days passed into

months, months became years, and the familiar customer with his brown bottle was forgotten.

The incident of the bundle had passed out of memory when one day an old man entered the wine-shop and cast his eyes round the place.

" Are you Mr So? " he asked the owner.

" That is my unworthy name, venerable grand-uncle," said Mr So. " What may I do for you? "

" Please give me the bundle which I left with you some time ago," said the stranger.

" The bundle! I do not remember your giving me a bundle. When did you leave it here? "

Mr So started when the stranger mentioned a date years before, and turned to question his men, none of whom could remember the old man or his bundle.

The stranger pressed Mr So to have the shop carefully searched, saying that the package which he had left for safe keeping had some slips of gold inside it, and it would be a terrible loss to him if they could not find it.

" We know nothing about the bundle, or what was in it, venerable grand-uncle, but if you left it here, you shall certainly have it back again," said Mr So.

After diligent search the bundle was found upon a shelf in the strong room at the back of the shop.

The old man's eyes glittered as he undid the fastenings of the bundle, now black with dust and cob-webs. Carefully he turned over the things inside it, laying them one by one upon the counter. There was a clatter and fall of metal. " The gold is here safe enough," said the stranger, taking up the dull yellow slips with his thin fingers. " One, two, three," he numbered slowly, " four, five, six," counting until the full tale was reached. The old man put back the gold, and did up his bundle in silence. Then he lifted his head.

" You are an honest man, Mr So," said he. " You have indeed been faithful in the trust which I committed to you so long ago."

" What have I done ? " answered Mr So. " The bundle has lain just as you left it," and with that he bowed low.

The old man waited. Then he spoke again.

" I have some skill in finding such spots as will bring good fortune to the children of those who are buried in them," said he. " You have kept my gold faithfully. I wish to make you some return for your kindness, and happily it is in my power to do so. Listen! there is a place outside the East Gate of the city, so fortunate that if you were to buy it and use it for your grave, your descendants afterwards would surely prosper in the world."

Mr So, who was no less superstitious than his neighbours, bought the ground, and when he died was buried in the lucky spot. The family prospered and in course of time one of his descendants became an official, so high in favour with the Emperor Ban-lek, that he gave him his sister to be his wife, and a ' five-storied pavilion ' for her to live in. Mr So's heirs continued to prosper, and some of them still live in the old home within the city. But we know that the family rose in the world, not because of the grave, which the old man thought so lucky, but through the blessing which follows upon doing what is right and honest.

Much as the Chinese praise faithfulness, the old men shake their heads and tell their children that people born in the time of the Emperor Hien-fung were more honest than those born during these last forty years, and those born earlier still, in the days of Tau-kwang, were still more faithful. It is the usual story, " the old days were better than the new,"

but the very sense of failure makes the people, young and old, more ready to welcome that Saviour, who alone can help men to be faithful and upright and true and good.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

From what you have read, you will think, perhaps, that Chinese children have a merry life, but it is not always so. Little girls, who were unwelcome to their families, used to be laid in the tiger's track or among woods to die. Some were choked immediately they were born, or drowned in a bucket. In many cities of the Empire kind-hearted people have provided places, where such little outcast waifs are nursed and tended; for the practice of doing away with children was always against the law of the land, although the popular proverb said: "Destroy a girl and you hasten the birth of a boy." Last year a Christian, after his conscience had been awakened, confessed that years before, while still a heathen, he had strangled a baby daughter, and put the little body into the mud of one of his rice fields.

Of late years, in many parts of China, the practice of putting girl babies to death has almost entirely ceased, partly, no doubt, because girls are scarce, and their value has risen accordingly; in some places as much as six hundred dollars being given by ordinary people for a wife.

Then there are many things which bring trouble upon children and their homes. When rain does not

fall for several weeks, there is little food for boys and girls to eat. So long as rivers and wells hold out, the farmers, by working hard, can water their fields. When the streams dry up, they dig holes in the sand of the river-beds and carry the water, which collects in them, to keep the crops alive. All the family in turns tread the water-wheel, which raises water out of such holes or channels, tramp, tramp, they toil unceasingly until their skins are burnt dark brown and the bones show through. If rain still does not come, their labour is lost, the crops dry up and the poor little children as well as their fathers and mothers have no food to eat, so that many of them die of hunger.

Sometimes there is too much rain: the rivers overflow, the grain is spoilt in the fields, pigs, goats and cows are swept away. The water rises. People climb on to the roofs of their houses, carrying clothes and the few things they hope to save from the flood. They crouch on the tiles, with their babies and little children, under the pitiless rain. Kind people, whose houses, being on higher ground, have not been deluged, go out in boats carrying food to them, for often they have had nothing to eat for several days. The flood rises still higher, in places it breaks the banks of great rivers. houses, temples, city walls and whole villages are swept away by the swift brown water, and thousands of men, women and children perish. Often, too, fires break out in crowded villages and towns. The flames spout from the windows, and showers of sparks fly into the sky when roofs fall in. If a wind happens to be blowing, a whole street of shops and houses is burnt down in no time. The people flee with their children and whatever they can save from their homes. The poor little babies and boys and girls fare badly indeed, when such trouble turns them out of doors. In parts

of China, plague comes every year and carries off hundreds of people, leaving many little children with no one to care for them. In the south of the Empire, too, the people are constantly having clan-fights between families or villages; often fathers or brothers are killed, and then there are lawsuits, which ruin many a family. All these causes bring distress and suffering upon Chinese boys and girls, such as are seldom met with in Western homes. But most of the trouble which falls upon children in China to-day comes from poverty. Grinding poverty leads to hunger and starvation. Often children must work as soon as they can toddle. When they are two or three they must look after the baby brother or sister, while the mother is away working in the fields. The baby is strapped on the toddler's back, and he or she must stagger about with it for hours, however weary the little limbs may be. Or the tiny boy or girl must go out with a small bamboo rake and fill a basket with leaves and grass to burn. In the country, quite small children must carry loads, and in the city baby workers toil at trades, till the anxieties of life have made them look old and wrinkled before they are ten years of age. One boy of ten used to work from morning till night in Chinchew city making clay furnaces. He was stunted, and his face was grey and pinched, but he helped his widowed mother to get a living. When people are very poor, two neighbours will exchange baby girls very soon after they are born, or a mother will sell her little baby girl for two or three dollars to another woman. The baby is then brought up by this foster-mother to be a little servant until old enough to marry her son, and so she gets a servant, and then a wife for her son very cheap. But this custom leads to much misery and unhappiness for these 'baby daughters-in-law,' as they are called. They

are usually treated as the family drudges and never know any childhood or parents' care; they have to work hard, and too often live a loveless, sad life.

The saddest thing of all, is when small girls are sold to be slaves. In places where food is dear and money is scarce, fathers and mothers are driven to part with their children. In certain districts, towards the end of the year, when debts have to be paid, they may be seen carrying their little boys and girls slung in baskets to sell. A nurse in the home of a foreign lady used to tell how she had had to let eight children go in this way. Her husband was poor and when there was no food to give them, she had to sell one of the children rather than see them all starve together at home. One of the boys had been bought by a rich family in the village, so she could see him sometimes, but of course he was not her own little boy any more. When her husband died, the poor woman had to let the remaining children go, one by one, for she had no food to give them. The last little boy she gave to some strolling players for thirty dollars, to be a little actor. When asked how she could sell a child to such a terrible life as these little actor-boys lead, the mother said, " Oh, after ten years he will be too big to act, and then I shall get him back again, and he has promised to be a good boy." The child had his yearly holiday on New Year's Day, and his half-starved mother would save up enough cash to buy a chicken to fatten for the occasion. When her boy came home she killed the chicken, and she and he had a feast on their one happy day together.

Sometimes slave children are well and kindly treated, but in China, as in other lands, slavery too surely leads to cruelty and suffering. The notices of slave girls lost, stolen or strayed, posted up on the gates

of Chinese cities, shows that many of these little girls are unhappy in their masters' houses, and easily persuaded to run away. Sad cases are brought to the hospitals, too, of slave children so wasted by neglect and starvation that the poor things are little more than skeletons. An old woman named Ch'uan Kua used to tell how her little girl, whom she had sold into a Viceroy's family, was unkindly treated. One day the poor child did something to offend her mistress, and the angry lady stabbed her to death, with one of her long hairpins.

Another cause of unhappiness to the little ones is the practice of opium smoking. When the father, or mother, or other wage-earner of the home, smokes opium, there is little for the children to eat. In time, some of the wretched slaves to opium sell house and land, furniture and clothes, wife and children, in order to get money for the terrible self-indulgence.

The following story gives some idea of what a little girl, named Phœnix, had to suffer from a father who was an opium-eater. The story is doubly interesting because it is told by herself.

"It would be very difficult to relate fully what I have passed through from my childhood until the present. I will only tell some of the principal events.

"When I was three years old my mother died. My grandfather cared for me until I was six, and then he also left this world. I had no one to care for me, and my father brought me to Amoy and sold me to Mrs No-te, who lived near the Bamboo-tree-foot church. From that time I had opportunities of hearing the Gospel, but could not go to school, as I was kept busy with house-work. When I was fifteen the Lord received me into His church, and I was baptised."

PHŒNIX

Phœnix does not mention that the woman who bought her broke the agreement made with the child's father, that she should in time become the wife of her son. The father, a wretched opium sot, made this an excuse for claiming the return of the girl, in order to sell her over again for more money.

" When I was sixteen years old my father demanded me back, and at that time my heart was very sorrowful. I was afraid he would not let me go to church. I took this trouble to the Lord, and Our Lord truly heard the prayer of His child. He also gave me the desire of my heart and let me go to the Girls' Boarding-school, to study and know more about the Bible. If it had not been for this, I would have been like a person blind. It was arranged through the earnestness and love of my pastor, who told my father that I belonged to the church, and that he must certainly put me to school. This he did and let me be in school for about one year, and then he came for me and I had to go with him, and I was very sad.

" My father soon took me to Tung An, and all the time I was there I could only manage to go to church once. . . .

" Someone told my father that I had been to church and he was very angry, and told me to take salt and salt down my heart, to make dead my heart. He said he certainly would not let me go to church, and told others that they must not let me go. He also said that if I had any communication with the lady missionary he would throw me down stairs and kill me. But the Lord was always with me and delivered me out of the mouth of the lion.

" Afterwards my father brought me to Amoy to my uncle's house. Two-thirds of the family are vegetarians, and early and late they burn incense and

candles to the idols. My heart was miserable in the extreme.

" My father tried to sell me to be the second wife of a rich man, who was willing to give nearly three hundred dollars for me. He said:

" ' Your old friend, the Bible-woman and the Christians will do nothing for you, you might as well make up your mind to it. The Bible-woman says there is no use trying to do anything more for you, that no Christian will marry you now.'

" I felt that he was telling me a lie, but I could not know if the Bible-woman, who had always been so good to me, had really said that or not, and I was very unhappy. My father kept urging me to agree to being sold to the rich heathen man, so that he might have the money to use. He was very angry with me because I was so strongly opposed. I said, ' I have made a covenant with the Lord, which I cannot break, I am His.'

" One day a sister of a Christian came to speak to my uncle, and someone said to me, ' That person is a follower of the Gospel like you and lives at Bamboo-tree-foot.' I said, ' Is that true? ' After this I found that she knew one of my classmates, who lives at Bamboo-tree-foot, and through her I secretly sent a letter to my classmate, asking her to tell the pastor's wife where I was. The letter was delayed several days, and before it was delivered one day I saw three Christians passing the house with Bibles in their hands, on their way to church, and so I knew that it was Sunday—I had lost count of Sundays—and I called to them. My father was out, or I should not have dared to speak to them. They were pleased to find me. They told the Bible-woman, and through them and my letter in a week's time the pastor's wife and

the Bible-woman both came to see me. I found out that what my father had said about the Bible-woman was not true, and they both comforted my heart.

" After this, I dreamed I had fallen into a ditch up to my neck, and someone pulled me out; that I went to school again, and was writing on my slate, and I thought: This means that God is going to open the way for me. In six more days, beyond all my hopes, God's great goodness was manifested, and I truly jumped for joy, when I was told that my father's consent was gained, and Miss —— had redeemed me for two hundred dollars, and that I was to go back again to school.

" In two days the pastor came for me and brought me to school. This truly manifests the love of God for sinful me, and also the love of Miss —— in that she gave money to save me. During the time of trial the Lord always helped me, and now He has brought me to this place, free from all fear. Love like this is truly great."

Phœnix has since become engaged to a young theological student and will probably be married within a year.

CHAPTER XIV

MINISTERING CHILDREN

In 1898 a boy named Ch'en Yo, generally known as Yo-ah, lived near the West gate of Chinchew city. His father, who was called Poah, used to sit by the road-side gambling with the passers-by. The boy went with him, and sometimes when his father lost a game, would have a turn at the board and win some money.

When Yo-ah was thirteen years old, his father first heard about the worship of the true God, and began to go to church, near the great western pagoda in the city. Strangely enough, Yo-ah, who had gone willingly enough to gamble, would not follow his father to church. For six months Poah went to the 'worship hall' alone, then he told his son that he must join him. Yo-ah did not wish people to know that he had anything to do with the 'Barbarian church,' so when out of obedience to his father he went to service, he used to creep through round-about lanes and side streets, in the hope that none of his friends would meet him on the way.

After a time Yo-ah went to school, though he was most unwilling to do so, thinking that gambling was better fun than poring over books. Seeing how idle he was, his father said to him one day:

"If you don't mean to study you had better go away, for I will not take care of you any longer."

Seeing that his father meant what he said, Yo-ah made up his mind to do better, and set about his work with a will. Not only did his lessons improve; in a short time his temper grew better,and he gave up using naughty words and telling lies. The secret of this wonderful change was that at school Yo-ah had learnt to know the Saviour.

The neighbours, who did not understand about worshipping God, noticed that Yo-ah had given up his rude ways, and did not answer back as he had done before he went to school. One of them, a widow who had an only son named Wu-mei, was very much struck by the change in him. Her son had been called Wu-mei, that is, Black Little Sister, to deceive the evil spirits into thinking that he was an ugly little girl, not worth troubling about, in the hope that they would

SUNDAY SCHOOL, CHINCHEW

let him grow up to manhood in peace. His mother, seeing how much Yo-ah had improved by study, sent Black Little Sister to the same school.

The new scholar read diligently, and soon began to drink in the story of the Gospel. Three or four months after he entered school a bad illness, called plague, broke out and many people died, both inside and outside the city. Black Little Sister sickened one day and had to be carried home in a chair, slung on two long bamboo poles.

His teacher, who wanted all the children he taught to know the Lord Jesus, was troubled about him, for he saw that he was very ill, and he did not know whether Black Little Sister had learnt to trust the Saviour or not. Just as he was starting off to go to the boy's house, Yo-ah's father came into the school-room and said:

" You need not go, teacher; Black Little Sister's mother has filled the house with idols, and he is delirious. Even if his people allowed you to enter his room, he would not understand what you said to him."

The teacher was very sorry when he heard what Poah said, for he saw that it would be useless to go to see his little friend.

Very early next morning Yo-ah's father came again with news of Black Little Sister, and best of all, he told the teacher that the dying boy believed in our Lord Jesus as his own true Saviour.

" Last night," said he, " when everyone could see that Black Little Sister was very ill and must surely die, his relations turned all the idols out of the house. Then I went in to see him. When I entered his room, I said, ' Black Little Sister, people say that you have lost your senses. Is it true? ' "

" ' No, brother Poah,' he answered, ' these heathen,

who do not understand what I am doing, think that I am out of my senses, because they see me constantly getting up and kneeling upon the bed to pray.' "

Seeing that the boy was able to talk quite sensibly, Poah brought another Christian, a man called Ah Lin, to come and see him.

" Shall I read some verses from the Bible to you? " asked Ah Lin, sitting down by the bedside.

" Yes, I should like you to read some very much," answered the dying boy.

Ah Lin opened his New Testament and began reading from the third chapter of St John's Gospel. When he reached the fifteenth verse he stopped.

" Black Little Sister," he said, " do you know the next verse? " It had been the golden text, repeated by the children at the Bible service on the previous Sunday.

" God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The poor dried lips slowly repeated the precious words to the end.

Then Poah and Ah Lin prayed. When they had finished Black Little Sister put his hands together and said: " Thank you, God, so much for giving your only born son, that I, a sinful one, believing on Him, might have everlasting life." Then the room was very quiet, for the boy was tired and neither Poah nor Ah Lin could speak a word.

Soon after this the fever died out of Black Little Sister's face and eyes. The fight was over. He had left the narrow room and its useless idols, and gone to the home of love and everlasting life.

Whilst Poah told the story to the good teacher, he

cried for joy and sorrow, until the tears ran down his cheeks.

In the fourth moon of the next year, the plague came to the city once more. On the 15th, Yo-ah was taken ill after morning school. When his minister went to see him, he said:

" Please do not say anything to my father about my sickness, for I am the last of six brothers, and if he were to hear that I was ill, he would be so sorry."

But the minister of course felt he must send for the father as quickly as possible.

When Poah reached the school he found Yo-ah sitting in bed reading his Bible. He seemed bright enough, and had just finished doing up accounts for one of the Christians, who had been out selling fish.

" What is wrong with you, Yo-ah? " asked his father.

" I have only got a small lump above my leg, which pains me a little, father."

The doctor came presently and gave the boy some medicine, but the medicine did not seem to have much effect.

That evening Yo-ah felt poorly. " If the fever does not go down to-night I will certainly be in Heaven to-morrow, father," said Yo-ah.

Next morning Yo-ah looked so much better that Poah was very glad and exclaimed to one of his friends, " I took a straw rope for a serpent this time," meaning that he had been frightened by his boy's illness when there was no reason to be afraid.

During the day one of the schoolboys, a great friend of Yo-ah's, went to see him. The sick lad was very glad to see him, and said: " Ah! So-and-so, you will go on to the middle school by-and-by. After-

wards you must give yourself to God's service and work for Him."

"You, too, must work for God, Yo-ah," answered his friend.

"The Lord is not going to leave me long in this world," said Yo-ah.

After this he begged one of his uncles to believe in Christ and find safety in Him. He also spoke to several of his friends asking them to give up things which they knew to be wrong in their lives. To one, who was careless about money, he said, "Brother Lin, you ought to live more sparingly. How can you glorify God when you are constantly in debt and people have to dun you for money at the end of the year?"

His father, seeing that though Yo-ah looked better, he acted like one about to leave this world, said to him:

"If you die, I will go and hang myself."

"Daddy, if you do what Judas did, then after my death, we two, father and son, will never see each other any more. You must live for God and tell people His truth with all your might when I am gone."

After this he spoke much with his father, asking him to be faithful to Christ. When noon came he stopped talking, saying, "Now all is finished."

His poor father was very sorry and tried to speak to him, but all that Yo-ah would say after this was "Submit, gladly submit," repeating the words over and over again, meaning that his father ought to be willing to let him go if God took him.

By seven o'clock that evening Yo-ah was restless, throwing himself from one side of the bed to the other. His father sat by, trying to soothe and quiet him, and as he watched through the dragging minutes he cried to God, for he was not willing that his only son should die.

The bell rang for evening prayer in the church, next door to the school. The poor man in his sore trouble wished to go to the service, but dared not leave the sick-room, fearing that Yo-ah might roll from the bed and fall upon the ground.

A change passed over him and a new calm came into his heart. He fell upon his knees in front of the bed and prayed:

"O, God! I submit to Thy will. I pray Thee to let my child go home in peace."

He rose from the ground. The restless tossing had stopped. Yo-ah was lying still upon the bed. After one long look the poor father went into the church. The service was nearly over when he entered the building and the minister was just saying, "If anyone wishes to lead us in prayer, let him do so." Poah began: "O God, I thank Thee for having given me this son to care for these fifteen years. Now Thou hast taken him home to Thyself. I gladly submit to Thy will. Only please help me to remember, and to do all that he spoke of when he talked to me."

At the close of the service the people knew that Yo-ah had 'crossed over' to the better land. Some of them wished to try to comfort his father, but they were all so grieved for him that no one could find a word to say. Poah, whose face was very calm, began to comfort them instead. He told them what Yo-ah had said, and asked them to join with him in submitting to the will of God.

That year plague raged in the city and many people died. One of the minister's sons, a boy of ten, sickened and died without a word. When Poah heard of it he said: "God has indeed been merciful to me. If my boy had died like this without comforting me, what should I have done?" Yo-ah's

father, who now seemed to live only for the good of others, went everywhere to help with the sick and dying. Next year he became an elder of the church, which he served most faithfully. A year later, the plague came again, and joyfully submitting to God's will he, too, went home to be with Jesus.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHILDREN'S KING

"The Cross is tall,
And I too small,
To reach His Hand
Or touch His Feet;
But on the sand
His foot-prints I have found,
And it is sweet
To kiss the holy ground."

UNTIL fifty years ago China, like the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, lay under a spell. Idolatry, love of money and evil customs, like the thorns and briars of the famous story, had overrun the land. The sacred names of God and Heaven, were almost forgotten. What wise men long ago had taught of peace and justice, of kindness and self-denial, had faded into dreams. The joy of learning, the reverence of father and mother, and the love of little children, lay under the enchantment of the Wicked One. Then the Prince came, our princely Lord Jesus, and China began to waken. At His touch the old-world knowledge of God, of peace and justice, of kindness and self-denial, stirred in the people's hearts and prepared them to welcome the Gospel. Then history, that wise

old story-teller, began to repeat herself. The Kingdom of God, when once founded in China, like the nation itself in bygone ages, began to grow. Its conquests were those of peace, and not of war. Surrounded by enemies, it drew them into itself, spreading light and love as it widened its borders.

Men and women came to put their trust in the Lord Jesus, and the little ones learned that He is the children's King. The King sent forth His messengers into every province, and, most wonderful of all, wherever the messengers went, the King went too, and whenever their message entered a human heart, His own kiss woke it to love and joy.

Churches began to grow, humble enough to look at, but more beautiful in God's sight than palaces of gold and precious stones. Schools were built all over the land, and Christian homes arose in many a village and town and great city.

You would love to see the children gather in God's house on the Lord's Day in China. Shaved heads and strange clothes would catch your eyes at first, but you would soon be attracted by the earnest faces and intent dark eyes of some of the little ones whose attention had been caught by a story. After service you would see them gather in the Sunday-school, and perhaps when you heard them repeat their texts, you would long to borrow their wonderful memories for your own use. If you followed the little boys and girls after service, you would find that the children's King had done much for them in their homes, but you would need to live with them for a time, to discover how great the change from the old heathen ways had really been. You would see, if you lived with them long enough, that the girls did not have their poor little feet pinched and bound. The babies would not be

sent away or sold, unless there was great poverty, and then they would only be allowed to go into another Christian family, where they would be loved and cared for. You would notice that the harsh words and sharp blows which heathen children, and especially little girls, have to bear, were fewer. There would be more gentleness and loving family life, less quarrelling and unkindness among the inmates.

When the family gathered for dinner, the little ones would put their fat fingers over their eyes, whilst grace was said. In the evenings, when the shadows fell, no stick of incense would be burnt in the guest-room, nor stuck in the paper lantern outside the door, but, a little later, hymn-books would be brought and the family would have prayers before going to bed. When you went into their room and sat on the edge of the children's bed, and got the little ones to nestle close up to you, they would whisper, if you asked them in the right way, that they loved Jesus.

Chinese boys and girls learn to love Jesus, that is the proof that Christ is the children's King, that the Prince Himself has kissed them and wakened them out of sin. And, if you turn back to the story of Yo-ah and Black Little Sister, you will see that when He calls them home to Himself, they lovingly go to be with Him.

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